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ABSTRACT

The passage of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1994 represented a fundamental shift in the character of federal aid to education and demanded new roles and responsibilities for states, districts, and the federal government. This handbook presents findings from a national mail survey of school districts and a telephone or in-person survey of state officials in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The survey examined the levels of understanding that state and district administrators have of the new legislation; the progress they report making in implementing the reforms; and the helpfulness of various forms of assistance that are available to states and districts. The district survey was mailed during spring and early summer 1996, and elicited an overall response rate of 83 percent (n=2,700). A total of 95 state-level surveys were completed. Key findings led to the following recommendations to the Department of Education (ED): (1) Continue efforts to support state level reform; (2) continue to support intermediaries to provide assistance to states and school districts; (3) sponsor small working conferences; (4) devise an information-dissemination and technical-assistance strategy geared to small districts; and (5) give special attention to high-poverty districts on the various elements of standards-based reform. The Department of Education should invest heavily in research and development associated with assessment systems and should focus greater effort in identifying the most effective technical-assistance strategies to schools not making adequate progress. Finally, three recommendations are offered to ED for tapping into effective information channels: it should maintain its written and oral communication channels; it should take full advantage of non-federal education publications; and it should capitalize on the established connections of state-based and professional associations. A total of 19 tables and 30 charts are included. Appendices contain copies of the district and state survey instruments. (LMI)

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Reports on Reform from the Field: District and State Survey Results

Final Report

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Reports on Reform from the Field:
District and State Survey Results

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study represents the first systematic national feedback from states and school districts on the state of education reform since the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* and the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) in 1994. It presents findings from a national mail survey of school districts and a telephone or in-person survey of state officials in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The surveys were undertaken to collect information from district and state level administrators about their views of standards-based reform and the new statutory provisions in the ESEA, the progress they are making in reform, the areas where they need more information and assistance, and the sources of assistance they find most helpful. The study responds to Congressional mandates in Sec.1501 and Sec.14701 of the ESEA for the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to report on progress in implementing Federal programs and their impact on reform.

The *District Survey* was mailed to a nationally representative sample of school districts over the spring and early summer of 1996. The sample was stratified by district enrollment size, poverty, and whether the districts were located in 'early reform' states -- Kentucky, Oregon and Maryland. These 'early reform' states, identified by a panel of experts, had comprehensive reform efforts underway at the time the federal legislation was enacted. The overall response rate was 83 percent, producing a sample of 2,700.

The *Survey of State Officials* was directed to individuals responsible for Title I and for Goals 2000 in those states that participated in the Goals 2000 program. The state surveys were administered either over the phone or in-person in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A total of 95 state level surveys were completed.

The key findings of the study are:

- Administrators at the state and district level report a high level of general understanding of reform and the new Federal provisions, although there is some indication that their confidence in their level of understanding may be misplaced. They also report needing more information on the details of implementation.

- At both the district and state level, administrators report lower progress and the need for a great deal more assistance in areas of assessment and accountability than in other areas of reform, as well as in how to provide effective technical assistance to districts and schools not making adequate progress in student performance.

- Districts in 'early reform' states appear to be making significantly greater progress in reform than districts in other states. They also appear to have a closer and more helpful relationship with their states.

- Smaller districts appear to be at a distinct disadvantage in reform. They report lower

levels of understanding of reform and less progress. They also appear to be not well-connected to helpful sources of information and assistance.

- Districts with the highest poverty appear to be having difficulty establishing standards and aligning the curricula, presumably early stages of reform. Districts with the greatest poverty also report needing a great deal more assistance in a number of areas, but particularly in providing technical assistance to schools not making adequate progress. While high poverty districts appear to be well-connected to helpful sources of assistance regarding Federal programs, they do not appear to have good connections to help with standards-based reform generally. Districts with the least poverty, in contrast, report higher levels of understanding of reform and greater progress.

- State officials identify Federal sources of information and assistance as very helpful in their reform efforts, as well as professional associations and education publications. Districts find Federal sources the least helpful. They rely more heavily on state sources, professional associations and education publications.

The findings provide clear direction to ED on 1) where to target its technical assistance and information efforts; 2) what areas to focus on; and 3) how to tap into effective information channels to reach state and local administrators on issues of reform. The recommendations associated with 1) and 3) are relatively straightforward. The recommendations associated with 2) probably involve a heavier investment in research and development by the Department.

1) Where to target efforts

- The Department should continue its efforts to support state level reform since states heavily engaged in reform appear to have significant leverage on the progress of districts.

- The Department should continue its support of intermediaries, e.g., the Council of Chief State School Officers and other state-based and regional associations, to provide assistance to States and school districts.

- The Department should sponsor small working conferences so that States can exchange information directly and learn from each other's experience.

- The Department should devise an information dissemination and technical assistance strategy geared to small districts since these districts are generally not well connected to wider information networks.

- The Department should give special attention to high-poverty districts on the various elements of standards-based reform. These districts appear to have good understanding of the objectives and procedures associated with Federal

programs, but need help in determining how to improve student learning.

2) Areas to concentrate efforts

- The Department should invest heavily in research and development associated with assessment systems and provide information and technical assistance in this area to States and school districts.

- The Department should focus greater effort in identifying and determining the effectiveness of different strategies for States and school districts to provide effective technical assistance to schools not making adequate progress.

3) Effective information channels

- The Department should maintain its written and oral communication channels which State officials report are very helpful in their reform efforts.

- The Department should take full advantage of non-federal education publications (e.g., those associated with professional associations as well as general publications such as Education Week) to disseminate information. These publications appear to reach state and especially local education administrators effectively.

- As noted above, the Department should capitalize on the established connections of state-based and professional associations to disseminate information to States and districts.

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I. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

Background

The passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* and the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) in 1994 represented a fundamental shift in the character of Federal aid to education and demanded new roles and responsibilities for states, districts and the Federal government. Where earlier Federal efforts were generally compliance-oriented and focused on particular categories of students, the 1994 legislation focused on the improvement of the core of education - teaching and learning - by supporting the reform initiatives of the states. Both pieces of legislation represent an attempt by the Federal government to assist states and school districts in raising academic standards in schools in the United States.

Goals 2000 encourages states' efforts to improve education standards by providing funds to states to develop academic content and performance standards and a means for assessing whether these standards are met. Determining the nature of the standards and how they are to be assessed remains the province of the states; in fact, the act explicitly proscribes Federal mandates or Federal control of curriculum or allocation of state and local resources. The standards-based reform movement promoted by Goals 2000 provides the conceptual and operational undergirding for the reforms in Title I and other ESEA programs as they were reauthorized in 1994.

ESEA was refashioned to bring Federal programs into accord with state-led reform efforts by providing greater flexibility to states and school districts in how they use Federal funds and by instituting changes designed to transform Federal programs from remedial programs into ones that promote high standards. The refashioning took the form of new provisions that allowed for greater state and local discretion and that, at the same time, required greater accountability.

The flexibility provisions, designed to facilitate the effective coordination of Federal programs with state reform efforts, included the following options for states and districts: increased eligibility for the use of the schoolwide programs; a waiver mechanism allowing the removal Federal requirements that impede state and local progress; the submission of consolidated applications for program funds; the consolidation of administrative funds across programs and, perhaps most importantly, a general move away from a procedural compliance accountability orientation on the part of the U.S. Department of Education to one concerned with technical assistance in achieving results.

ESEA also introduced new accountability provisions. It required that states develop high content and performance standards for students in Federal programs and that the assessment system that tracks the progress of students in Federal programs be the same as that used by the state for other students. It also required under Title I that states and districts establish criteria for "adequate yearly progress" for schools and provide technical assistance to those districts and schools not making adequate progress. In addition, it established reporting requirements including reporting student performance by proficiency levels and developing and disseminating

school profiles.

In the wake of the 1994 legislation, ED redesigned its technical assistance strategies to support state-level and district-level reform initiatives. There were two main objectives in the redesign: 1) to offer comprehensive assistance that promotes coherent reform and moves away from the restrictive compartments of categorical programs; and 2) to establish a partner role with states rather than a regulatory one. Three new structures developed: Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers (TACs), Regional Service Teams (RSTs), and partnerships with outside groups and organizations. The TACs and RSTs are both designed to ensure that support is coherent across programs. The TACs, 15 regionally based centers authorized by the 1994 legislation, are designed to replace program-specific technical assistance centers and to foster program integration. RSTs, made up of front-line ED staff from different program offices within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and assigned to particular regions, conduct integrated reviews of all OESE programs at the state level. Historically, these reviews were conducted program by program with program-specific staff. ED also developed new partnerships with organizations that have on-going relationships with states and districts. One major partnership -- the State Education Improvement Partnership (SEIP) -- is a collaborative effort among five state-based organizations (the National Governors Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Council of State Legislatures, the Education Commission of the States, and the Council of Chief State School Officers) to provide assistance to states. Another, the Business Coalition for Education Reform (BCER), involves a number of business groups and encourages effective school-business partnerships.

Purpose and Study Outline

The study reported here was designed to examine the levels of understanding that state and district administrators have of the new legislation; the progress they report making in implementing the reforms, and the helpfulness of various forms of assistance that are available to states and districts. The work was undertaken to assess Federal efforts to support reforms associated with Goals 2000 and ESEA and responds to Congressional mandates in Sec.1501 and Sec.14701 of ESEA for the U. S. Department of Education (ED) to report on progress in implementing Federal programs and their impact on reform. To collect the information a mail survey was administered to a national sample of school districts in the United States, and a survey was conducted either in-person or over the phone with state officials across the country. The study was preceded by a review and analysis of the form and content of various documents concerned with changes in the legislation that were produced by the Department and disseminated to "customers" at the state and local levels.

The four-page *District Survey* (Appendix A) asked questions about the level of understanding and implementation of specific elements of reform; the sources of information districts use to learn about reforms; the helpfulness of different sources of information and technical assistance; and the areas in which districts believe they need more assistance. Districts responded to these questions in terms of standards-based reform generally and, more specifically,

in terms of changes in statutory provisions in ESEA designed to support standards-based reform. Surveys were mailed to a nationally representative sample of school districts over the spring and summer of 1996. The sample was stratified by district enrollment size, poverty, and whether the districts were located in "early reform" states (Kentucky, Oregon and Maryland) as identified by a panel of experts. The overall response rate was 83 percent, producing a total sample of 2,700 school districts.

The *Survey of State Officials* asked corresponding questions of state-level officials responsible for Title I and for Goals 2000[1]. (See Appendix B.) Officials were contacted in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. Most of the surveys were administered over the phone, but data were collected on site in fourteen states. A total of 95 state level surveys were completed. The state-level survey was conducted with the help of Policy Studies Associates.

Prior to developing the surveys, the Urban Institute interviewed Department staff who were instrumental in designing and implementing key elements of the Federal reform effort in order to ascertain the content of the information the Department was sending to states and districts, the means of dissemination the Department was using, and how successful officials felt the Department was in providing clear and consistent information to it "customers". Similar questions were asked of representatives of national associations and consortia (the National Education Goals Panel, the National Assessment Governing Board, the Advisory Council on Education Statistics, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Alliance of Business) who have been active in disseminating information about reforms associated with the objectives of the Goals 2000 and ESEA legislation.

The remainder of the report is organized into three main parts. Part II describes the study design including the sampling plan for the *District Survey* and the *Survey of State Officials*. Part III presents the findings, with the responses from districts reported first followed by the results from the states. The district results discuss findings for the nation as a whole and then describe ways in which responses differed in different policy contexts: districts in 'early reform'(Kentucky, Oregon and Maryland) states, in ED-Flex states (Kansas, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Vermont)[2] and Goals 2000 subgrant recipients. Results from districts with different characteristics, in particular district size (enrollment) and poverty, are also shown and discussed. The results from the *Survey of State Officials* follow in a separate section. Part IV of the report summarizes the findings and discusses their implications.

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[1] At the time of the survey five states did not have Goals 2000 coordinators (Georgia, Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Virginia).

[2] These were the ED-Flex states designated at the time of the survey.

II. METHODOLOGY: STUDY DESIGN AND SAMPLING PLAN

A. STUDY DESIGN

Objectives

Both the *District Survey* and the *Survey of State Officials* were designed by The Urban Institute after extensive interviewing of ED staff and careful review of the Goals 2000 and ESEA 1994 legislation and ED-developed regulations and preliminary, draft and final guidance stemming from the legislation.[3] The general purpose of the surveys was to provide information on Federal efforts to assist standards-based reform (definition used in survey is shown in box) at the state and local level. They were conducted in response to Congressional mandates in Sec. 1501 and Sec. 14701 of ESEA for the U. S. Department of Education (ED) to report on progress in implementing Federal programs and their impact on reform. We wanted to know about the level of state and district understanding of the various elements of standards-based reform as well as the level of understanding of new provisions in the ESEA legislation designed to support state and local efforts. We also wanted to know the extent to which various sources of assistance were helpful to state officials and local districts in their reform efforts as well as the areas in which they needed more information and assistance. In addition, we were interested in determining how responses differed in different policy contexts (see below) and with different districts characteristics (district size and poverty level). The survey instruments are attached in Appendix A and B.

Comprehensive standards-based reform is defined as efforts to improve education for all students by establishing high content and performance standards and redesigning the various components of the education system - curriculum, instruction, professional development and assessment - in a coordinated and coherent fashion to support students' learning to the standards. Currently, there is discussion of the need to establish new high standards for student achievement both in the content that students are expected to learn (content standards) and in the level of performance that students are expected to achieve (performance standards, e.g., proficient, advanced, novice). Standards go beyond general expectations for student learning in that they are written, may be externally developed and are to be applied uniformly to all students.

Respondents

The *District Survey* was addressed to school district superintendents, but superintendents were told they could pass the survey on to someone else in the district who might be more knowledgeable about the topics covered in the survey. Individuals actually completing the survey were asked to identify themselves and their position. Presumably the person responding to the

[3] *Reform Within the U.S. Department of Education: Summary of Interviews* and *Document Review* were prepared by the Urban Institute for the Planning and Evaluation Service, U. S. Department of Education under this contract (EA94053001).

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survey in each district is someone particularly knowledgeable about reform and Federal programs. As should be clear, superintendents were most likely to complete the survey in the smallest districts, and general administrators (e.g. Associate or Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Director of Instruction) were most likely to complete the survey in the largest districts. Table 2.1 below shows the respondents by position and by district size (enrollment) categories. The *Survey of State Officials* was directed specifically to the State Title I director and the Goals 2000 coordinator.

Table 2.1

RESPONDENT POSITION BY DISTRICT SIZE

SIZE (Number of students)[1]	Super-intendent	Asst. Supt. / Director[2]	Title I / Fed. Programs Coordinator[3]	Principal	Other[4]	Missing	Total N
300 - 2,500	739 (65%)	259 (23%)	29 (3%)	67 (6%)	5 (0.4%)	36 (3%)	1135 (100%)
2,501 - 10,000	325 (33%)	525 (53%)	83 (8%)	6 (1%)	0	45 (5%)	984 (100%)
10,001 -25,000	91 (24%)	221 (58%)	59 (15%)	0	3 (0.8%)	8 (2%)	382 (100%)
> 25,000	23 (12%)	138 (69%)	27 (14%)	1 (0.5%)	0	10 (5%)	199 (100%)
Total N	1178	1143	198	74	8	99	2700 (100%)

[1]Based on total district enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94. Percentages are based on total N for each size category.
[2]Includes general administrators such as assistant and associate superintendents, directors, coordinators, in charge of curriculum, instruction, etc.
[3]Administrators whose titles are specifically related to Title I or Federal Programs.
[4]Includes guidance counselors and teachers.

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Policy Context

Early Reform States

Maryland began a major statewide education reform, Success for Schools, in 1989 which included programs for at-risk students, mandatory kindergarten, more stringent high school graduation requirements and, most importantly, a new state performance-based assessment system. The Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) assesses student performance in terms of high standards and provides an index of school performance. It was first administered in 1991.

Kentucky completely revamped its education system after the state supreme court ruled the system unconstitutional in 1989. The state legislature framed a new system through the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA). The law set goals and standards and included new testing strategies to measure how well students and schools were performing. The reforms also established a high-stakes accountability system of rewards and sanctions based on school improvement toward performance goals.

Oregon began one of the most ambitious school reform programs in the country in 1991 when the state legislature passed the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century. The law required 10th graders to earn a "certificate of initial mastery" and 11th and 12th graders to work toward a "certificate of advanced mastery." In 1995 an amendment specified that certificates be based on "rigorous academic content standards" and the state board of education adopted standards through 10th grade. By 1998-99 sophomores must meet a set standard on statewide assessments to receive a certificate.

One of the objectives of the survey was to determine whether responses differed in different policy contexts. We were particularly interested in district responses in states that were early leaders in standards-based reform. With the help of a panel of experts we identified Kentucky, Maryland and Oregon as 'early reform' states and sampled districts intensively in these states. (See text box.)

We also looked at the pattern of responses in states that were identified as ED-Flex states at the time the survey was administered (Kansas, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Vermont). The Secretary of Education allowed ED-Flex states to waive regulations associated with Federal education programs in order to use funds more flexibly to support reform. In addition, we examined responses of districts that reported in the survey that they had received Goals 2000 subgrants. Table 2.2 (on the next page) shows the number of districts in our sample from each policy context as well as the district size and poverty distribution in each set.

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Table 2.2

DISTRICT SIZE AND POVERTY ACROSS DISTRICT POLICY CONTEXT

	National Sample	Districts in Early Reform States	Districts with Goals 2000 subgrants	Districts in ED-Flex States
SIZE[1] (Number of students)				
300 - 2,500	1135 (42%)	94 (44%)	255 (30%)	254 (49%)
2,501 - 10,000	984 (36%)	87 (41%)	334 (39%)	171 (33%)
10,001 - 25,000	382 (14%)	20 (9%)	163 (19%)	54 (10%)
> 25,000	199 (7%)	13 (6%)	94 (11%)	40 (8%)
Total N	2700 (100%)	214 (100%)	846 (100%)	519 (100%)
POVERTY[2]				
< 5% poverty	381 (14%)	8 (4%)	92 (11 %)	75 (14%)
5% - 25% poverty	1820 (67%)	156 (73%)	577 (68%)	344 (66%)
> 25% poverty	499 (19%)	50 (23%)	177 (21%)	100 (19%)
Total N	2700 (100%)	214 (100%)	846 (100%)	519 (100%)

[1]Size is based on total district enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94.
[2] Poverty is based on the percentage of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census.

District Characteristics: District Size and District Poverty Level

Information on district size (district enrollment) was taken from the Common Core of Data (CCD), 1993-94 Agency Universe. The poverty level in each district was determined by the proportion of youth, ages 5 to 17 years old, living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census.

Survey Administration

The *District Survey* was a mail survey administered by the Urban Institute in the late spring and early summer of 1996. The *Survey of State Officials* was conducted by Policy Studies Associates as part of a larger survey of state reform they conducted for the Planning and Evaluation Service, U. S. Department of Education in fall, 1996 and early winter, 1997. Most of the state surveys were completed over the telephone, but surveys in 14 states were conducted in person.

B. Sampling Plan

District Survey

A stratified random sample of school districts was chosen from the Common Core of Data (CCD), 1993-94 Agency Universe. The universe was restricted to those districts with at least 300 students resulting in a universe of 11,143 districts. The sample was designed to be nationally representative of school districts, stratified by whether the district was located in an 'early reform' state, by the poverty level in the district, and by district enrollment. School districts were divided into 16 cells according to the following stratifiers:

'Early Reform' status	2 categories: 'Early Reform' (Maryland, Oregon, Kentucky) vs. Other states;
District Poverty	2 categories: Districts below and above median (13.29) in % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty;
District Size	4 categories based on enrollment: 300-2500 students; 2501-10,000 students; 10,001-25,000 students; 25,000 or more students.

Districts were randomly sampled within each of the 16 cells in proportion to the number of districts in that cell in the universe. The number of districts to sample from each cell was chosen with the goal of obtaining a 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 5 percentage points around a 50% mean for a binary outcome. We assumed a 60% response rate and corrected for the finite size of the population. Table 2.3 shows the total number of districts in the universe in each category, the number sampled, and the response rate. Overall, the national response rate was 83%.

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Table 2.3

UNIVERSE, (NUMBER SAMPLED) AND RESPONSE RATE BY SAMPLING CELL

	Poverty ≥ Median		Poverty < Median	
Number of students	**'Early Reform'**	**Other States**	**'Early Reform'**	**Other States**
300-2,500	143 (86) 78%	3646 (689) 80%	58 (47) 57%	3597 (659) 75%
2,501-10,000	94 (74) 89%	1256 (492) 87%	33 (25) 84%	1586 (551) 85%
10,001-25,000	7 (6) 83%	245 (196) 90%	11 (11) 136%*	261 (205) 91%
> 25,000	5 (5) 100%	130 (130) 91%	8 (8) 100%	63 (63) 108%*
NATIONAL	11,143 (3247) 83%			

* The response rate is over 100% because district mergers, which occurred after the 1993-94 Common Core Data were compiled, resulted in a few districts actually being larger than reported in the Common Core from which the sample was drawn.

Data were weighted to be both representative nationally and representative of combinations of strata. Because the data are based on a stratified random sample and not a simple random sample, appropriate corrections were made to standard errors to take into account the complex design as reflected in the weights.

Survey of State Officials

The *Survey of State Officials* was directed to all fifty states and the District of Columbia with the State Title I Director and State Goals 2000 Coordinator as respondents. At the time of the survey five states (Georgia, Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Virginia) did not have Goals 2000 Coordinators. All states had Title I Directors although titles vary from state to state. The universe for the state survey was therefore 97 state officials (51 Title I Directors and 46 Goals 2000 Coordinators); a total of 95 surveys were completed. All 46 Goals 2000 Coordinators and 49 of the Title I Directors completed the survey by the time of the analysis.

III. FINDINGS

This chapter has two major sections. The first focuses on responses to the district survey; the second focuses on responses to the state survey. Within each of these sections, we look at the reported status of reform and the sources of information and technical assistance upon which respondents rely for help in their reform efforts.

A. DISTRICT LEVEL RESULTS

In this first section, we present findings from the *District Survey*. We report responses to questions about standards-based reform and about new statutory provisions in the ESEA legislation. We show results for the nation as a whole, and describe how responses differ for districts in different policy contexts -- whether the district is located in an 'early reform' state, whether it is in an ED-Flex state, and whether it has received a Goals 2000 subgrant. We also examine how responses differ by characteristics of the districts, in particular the size (enrollment) of the district and its poverty rate. We present findings with charts and tables for bivariate results and then present multivariate results as well as examine interaction effects. We also look at the extent to which districts take advantage of the waiver option and the content of the requests they make. Responses to questions about the helpfulness of different sources of information and technical assistance to district reform efforts are presented next.

ON IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORM

STANDARDS-BASED REFORM

The *District Survey* began with three questions about specific elements of standards-based reform: 1) the level of understanding of the operational meaning of each of the elements; 2) the amount of change each of the elements requires of the school district; and 3) the amount of progress the district is making implementing each of the elements. The elements of standards-based reform identified in the survey are shown in the box on the right.

Elements of Standards-Based Reform

- Establishing high content and performance standards for all students
- Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards
- Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards
- Linking professional development to standards
- Linking school/ district accountability to student performance
- Building partnerships with parents/ community

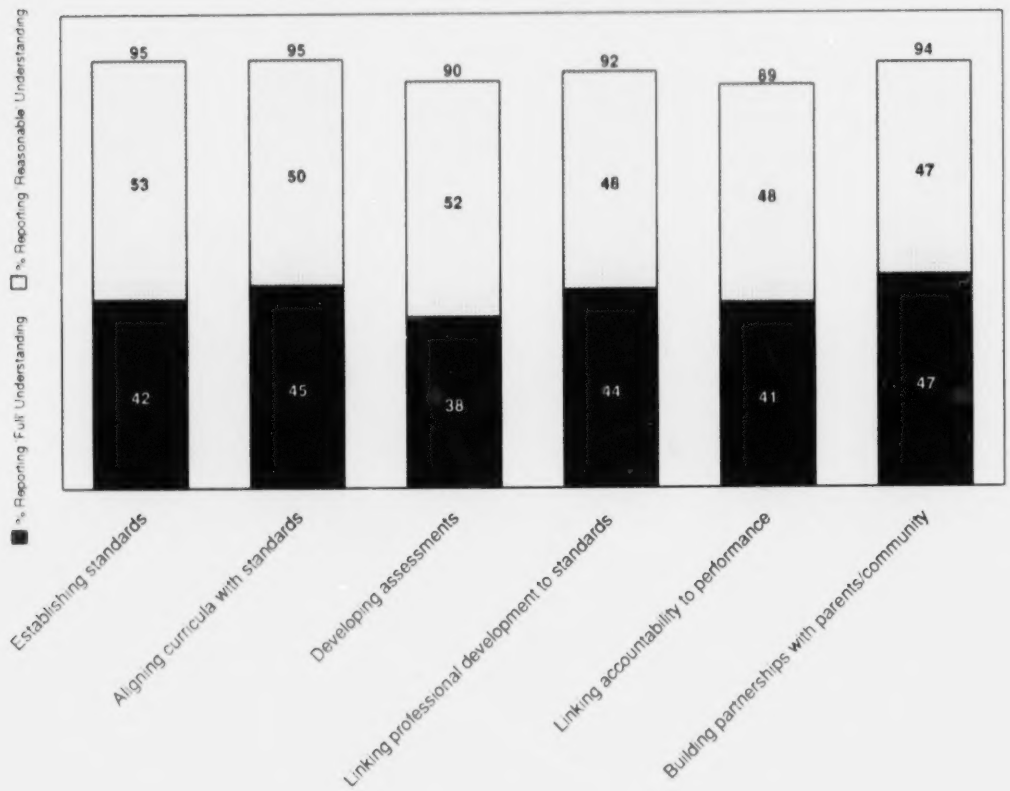
The National Picture

Districts nationally reported high levels of understanding of all elements of standards-based reform. (Chart 3.1) From 38 to 47 percent of districts reported 'full' understanding of the various elements of standards-based reform. When combined with reports of 'reasonable' understanding, overall levels appear very high. Eighty-nine percent of districts reported 'reasonable' or 'full' understanding of *linking school/ district accountability to student performance* and at least 90 percent of districts claimed similar levels of understanding of all the other elements of standards-based reform identified in the survey. These reports of high levels of understanding, however, should be interpreted cautiously. It is important to remember that these measures of understanding are the self-reports of respondents of the extent to which they feel they understand reform. We have no objective measures of understanding.

Chart 3.1

Level of Reported Understanding by Standards-Based Reform Element

Q1a. Report the extent to which you understand what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district



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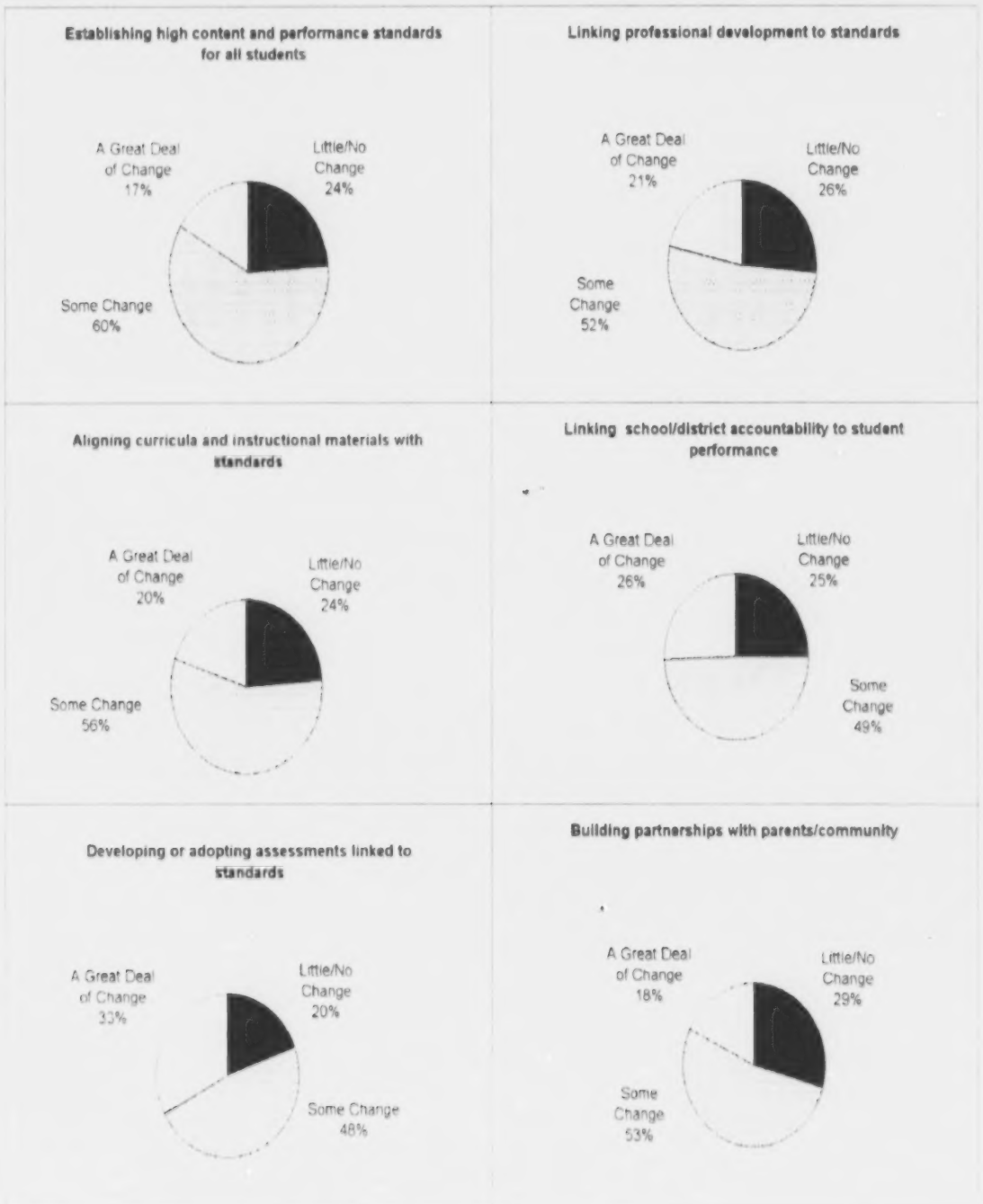
While objective measures of district understanding of reform are not available, we have evidence that some districts may have overestimated their levels of understanding. A large fraction of districts, about 25 percent, reported that standards-based reform requires 'little' or 'no change' on their part. In other words, many districts feel they understand standards-based reform, but their understanding is that, for them anyway, it represents a fairly modest effort, requiring little different from what they already do.[4] (Chart 3.2) District reports range from 20 percent for 'little' or 'no change' in *developing or adopting assessments linked to standards* to 29 percent for *building partnerships with parents/community*. With the exception of the assessment and accountability elements of reform, only about 20 percent of districts reported reform requires 'a great deal' of change on their part. Indeed, only 17 percent reported *establishing high content and performance standards* requires 'a great deal' of change. In other words, 83% of districts think establishing high standards requires relatively modest change on their part. Proponents of standards-based reform no doubt have something more ambitious in mind. District reports of change are discussed further below as we describe differences across districts with different characteristics.

[4] A reasonably large fraction of districts of all types tended to report this way, even high poverty districts where student performance is typically low. For example, a full quarter of the highest poverty districts (25+% poverty) reported that *establishing standards* required 'little' or 'no' change on their part; one-third of school districts with the least poverty (<5% poverty) reported the same.

Chart 3.2.

Reported Change Required by Standards-Based Reform Element


Establishing high content and performance standards for all students
A Great Deal of Change 17%
Little/No Change 24%
Some Change 60%
Linking professional development to standards
A Great Deal of Change 21%
Little/No Change 26%
Some Change 52%
Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards
A Great Deal of Change 20%
Little/No Change 24%
Some Change 56%
Linking school/district accountability to student performance
A Great Deal of Change 26%
Little/No Change 25%
Some Change 49%
Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards
A Great Deal of Change 33%
Little/No Change 20%
Some Change 48%
Building partnerships with parents/community
A Great Deal of Change 18%
Little/No Change 29%
Some Change 53%

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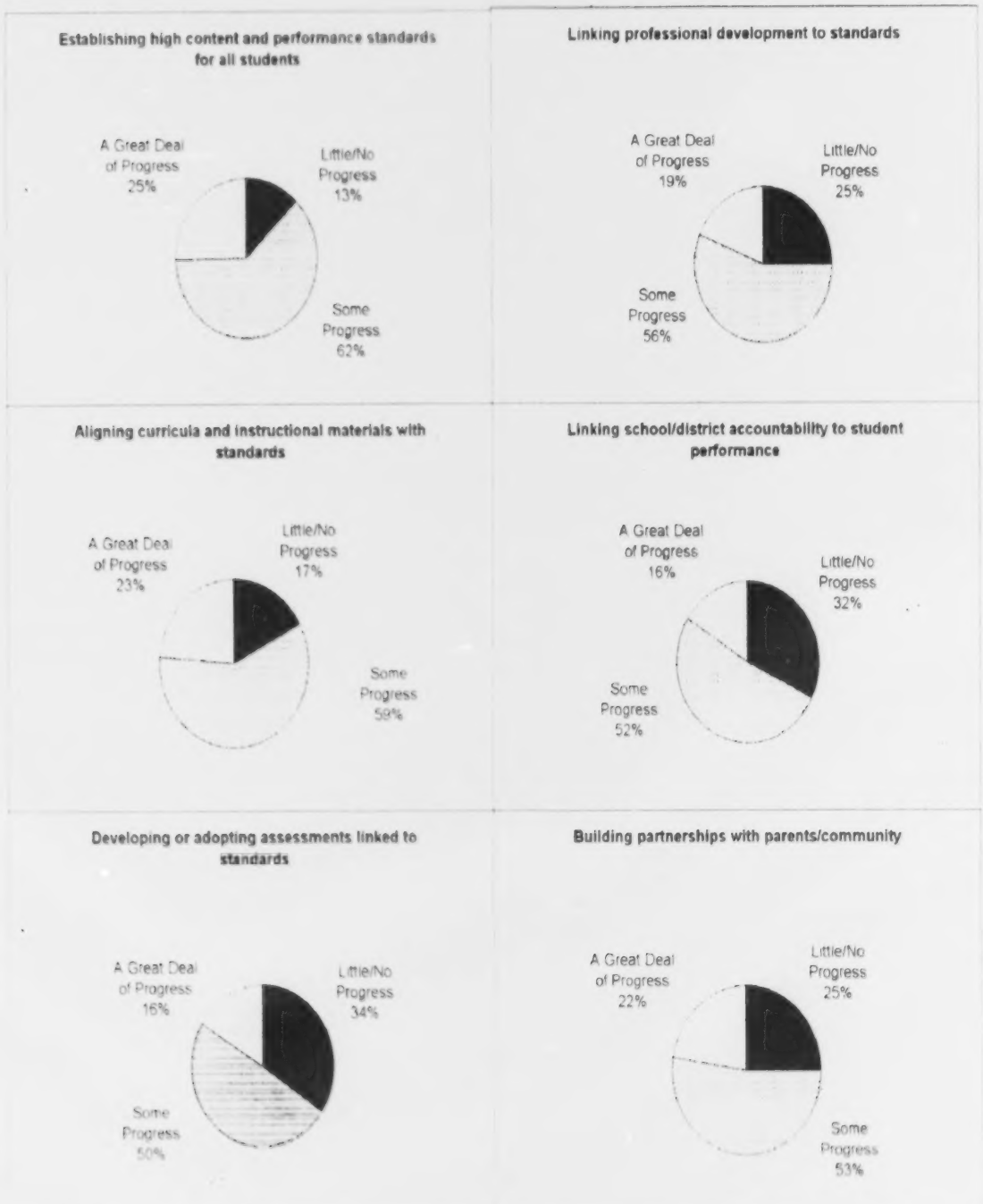
In addition to reporting high levels of understanding of reform elements, districts nationally also reported they are making progress in their reform efforts. (Chart 3.3) Again these reports are self-assessments of progress, but they are useful for identifying areas where districts may need greater assistance. Nationally, districts reported the greatest progress in *establishing high content and performance standards* and *aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards;* 25 and 23 percent, respectively, reported 'a great deal' of progress and only 13 and 17 percent reported 'little' or 'no' progress in these areas. Districts reported the least progress in areas of assessment and accountability. About one-third of the districts reported 'little' or 'no' progress in *developing or adopting assessments* (34%) and *linking school/ district accountability to student performance* (32%). Since assessment and accountability are critical ingredients of a standards-based reform dynamic, these findings point out a particularly great need for more assistance to school districts in these areas.

Chart 3.3

Reported Progress by Standards-Based Reform Element


Establishing high content and performance standards for all students
A Great Deal of Progress 25%
Little/No Progress 13%
Some Progress 62%
Linking professional development to standards
A Great Deal of Progress 19%
Little/No Progress 25%
Some Progress 56%
Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards
A Great Deal of Progress 23%
Little/No Progress 17%
Some Progress 59%
Linking school/district accountability to student performance
A Great Deal of Progress 16%
Little/No Progress 32%
Some Progress 52%
Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards
A Great Deal of Progress 16%
Little/No Progress 34%
Some Progress 50%
Building partnerships with parents/community
A Great Deal of Progress 22%
Little/No Progress 25%
Some Progress 53%

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Differences by Policy Context

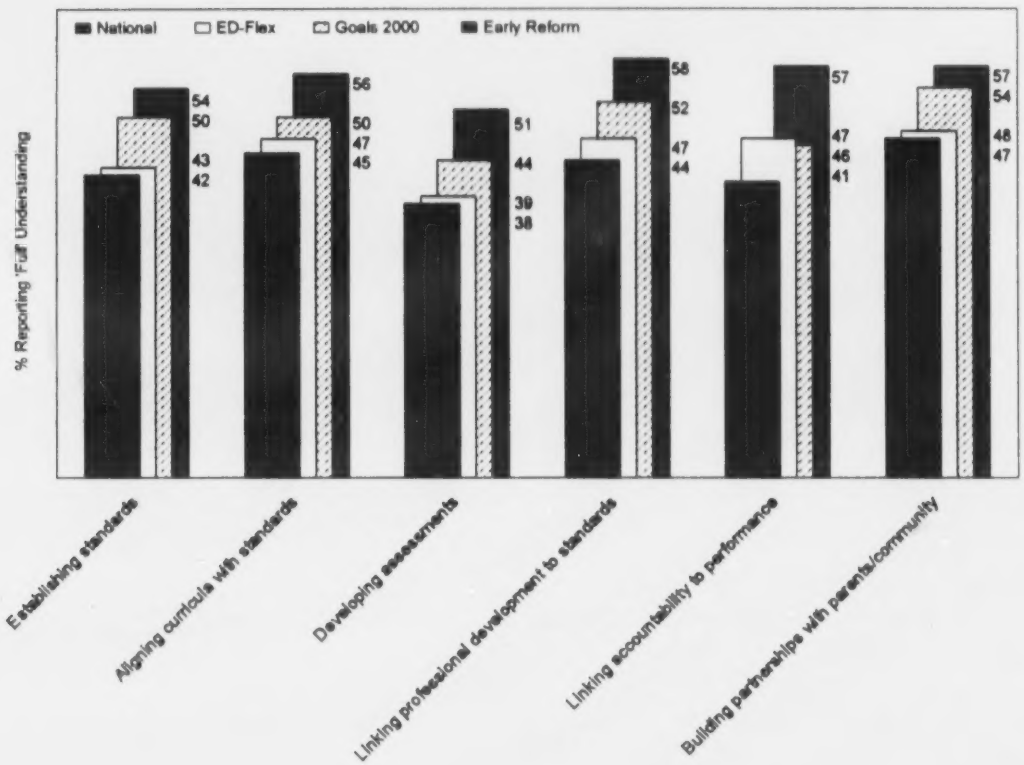
Districts that have had more experience with reform view it somewhat differently. Districts that are located in 'early reform' states and those that have received Goals 2000 subgrants reported both greater understanding of the elements of standards-based reform as well as that reform requires greater change on their part. Since these districts are presumably the voice of experience, they probably have a clearer understanding of what reform entails.

Early Reform States. Chart 3.4 compares the reports of districts in 'early reform' states with districts in other states on understanding of all elements of standards-based reform. Table 3.1 additionally shows that districts in 'early reform' states reported that, with the exception of *developing or adopting assessments*, the amount of change required by standards-based reform is greater in 'early reform' states than that reported by districts in other states. Districts in 'early reform' states were also more likely to report progress in implementing reform. Some of these differences are quite large. For example, twice the percent of districts in 'early reform' states (30%) as in other states (16%) reported 'a great deal' of progress in *linking school/ district accountability to student performance* and in *developing or adopting assessments linked to standards* (31% vs. 16%). These findings suggest a clear and strong influence of state-level policies on district-level progress.

Chart 3.4

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Understanding by Policy Context*

Q1a. Rate the extent to which you understand what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district.



*See Table 3.1 for significance levels.

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Table 3.1 UNDERSTANDING, CHANGE, AND PROGRESS by Policy Context

Report the extent to which you UNDERSTAND what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district, how much CHANGE will be required to implement each component, and your actual progress in IMPLEMENTING each component.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Districts in Other States / Early Reform States[1] n=2486 / n=214	Other Districts / Goals 2000 Subgrant Districts[2] n=1389 / n=846	Districts in Other States / ED-Flex States[3] n=2181 / n=519
On Standards				
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'full' understanding of the elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	41 / 54 ***	40 / 50 ***	41 / 43
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	44 / 56 ***	44 / 50 **	44 / 47
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	37 / 51 ***	36 / 44 ***	38 / 39
	Linking professional development to standards	44 / 58 ***	43 / 52 ***	44 / 47
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	41 / 57 ***	41 / 46	39 / 47 **
	Building partnerships with parents/community	46 / 57 **	44 / 54 ***	46 / 48
CHANGE *% of districts reporting a great deal of change required to implement elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	16 / 26 ***	13 / 21 ***	17 / 14
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	19 / 30 ***	16 / 25 ***	21 / 15 ***
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	33 / 35	30 / 39 ***	35 / 27 ***
	Linking professional development to standards	21 / 28 *	21 / 23	21 / 24
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	25 / 36 ***	23 / 30 **	26 / 25
	Building partnerships with parents/community	18 / 25 **	17 / 19	18 / 16
PROGRESS *% of districts reporting a great deal of progress implementing elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	25 / 30	27 / 24	24 / 31 **
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	23 / 34 ***	24 / 25	23 / 26
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	16 / 31 ***	16 / 17	15 / 19
	Linking professional development to standards	18 / 34 ***	18 / 22	18 / 21
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	15 / 30 ***	17 / 15	14 / 23 ***
	Building partnerships with parents/community	22 / 26	20 / 26 **	23 / 20

[1] Early Reform States= KY, MD, & OR. (std errors= 2%-4%).
[2] 1389 districts reported they do NOT have a Goals 2000 subgrant; 846 reported they do. Other reports were treated as 'missing.' (std errors= 2%).
[3] ED-Flex States= KS, MA, OH, OR, TX, & VT. (std errors= 2%-3%).

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests.

Goals 2000 Subgrant Districts. The pattern of responses regarding understanding and change for districts that are recipients of Goals 2000 subgrants is similar to that of districts in 'early reform' states -- significantly higher levels of understanding and higher estimates of the amount of change required by most elements of standards-based reform. These findings suggest a significant influence of Goals 2000 on understanding reform at the local level. Districts with

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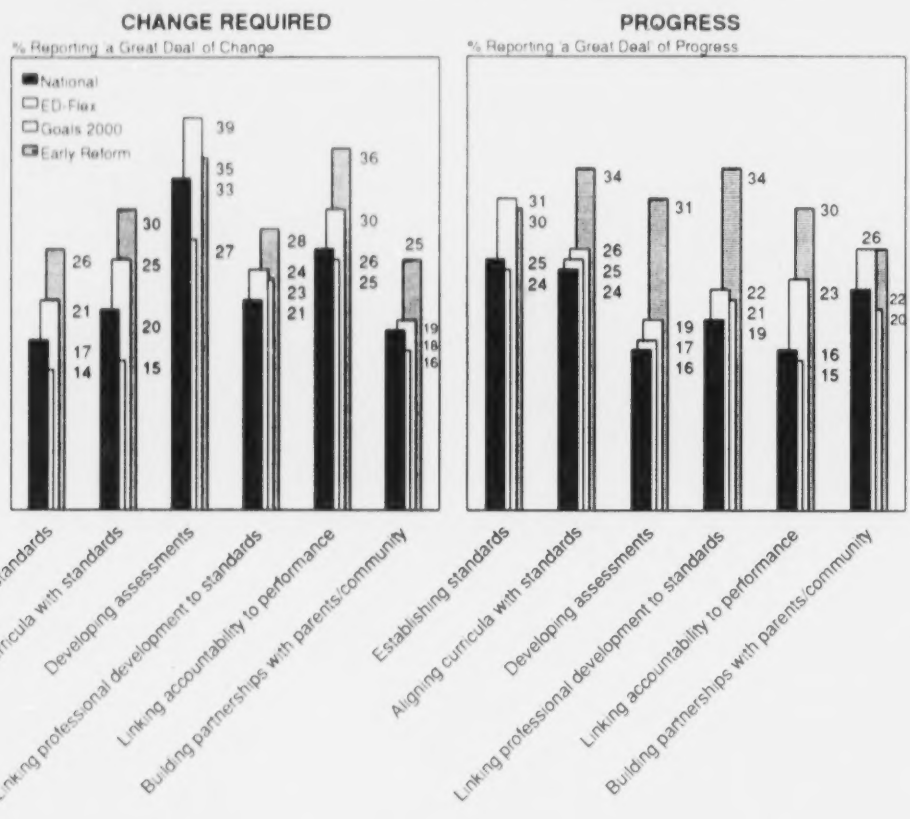
Goals 2000 subgrants, however, did not generally report significantly higher levels of progress than districts without such grants. (Table 3.1; Chart 3.5)

ED-Flex States. The reports of districts in ED-Flex states do not appear to be much different from the national sample except they claimed greater understanding of, and greater progress in, *linking school/ district accountability to student performance.* (Chart 3.4 and 3.5) And unlike other districts that are experienced with reform, districts in ED-Flex states reported *aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards* and *developing or adopting assessments linked to standards* require less change than reported by other districts. This finding opens interesting questions about the actual paths of reform districts in ED-Flex states pursue, but such questions are beyond the scope of the data we have available.

Chart 3.5

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Change Required and Progress by Policy Context*

Q1b&c. Report (b) how much CHANGE will be required to implement the following components of reform in your district; and (c) your district's actual progress in IMPLEMENTING reform.



*See Table 3.1 for significance levels.

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Differences by District Characteristics

District Size. Chart 3.6 shows the reported levels of understanding of elements of standards-based reform across districts of different size. The pattern is clear and dramatic. Respondents in larger districts, on average, reported higher levels of understanding of standards-based reform than respondents in smaller districts. Table 3.2, for example, shows that 36 percent of the smallest districts (enrollment 300-2500 students), but nearly twice that percentage (71 %) of the largest districts (enrollment >25,000), reported 'full' understanding of the operational meaning of *establishing high content and performance standards for all students*. Indeed, on all the items concerned with understanding elements of reform, reported levels of understanding increase with district size. Larger districts also tended to report greater progress implementing reform than smaller districts report. For example, only 13 percent of the smallest districts report 'a great deal' of progress *linking school/ district accountability to student performance*, but 34 percent of the largest districts report such progress.

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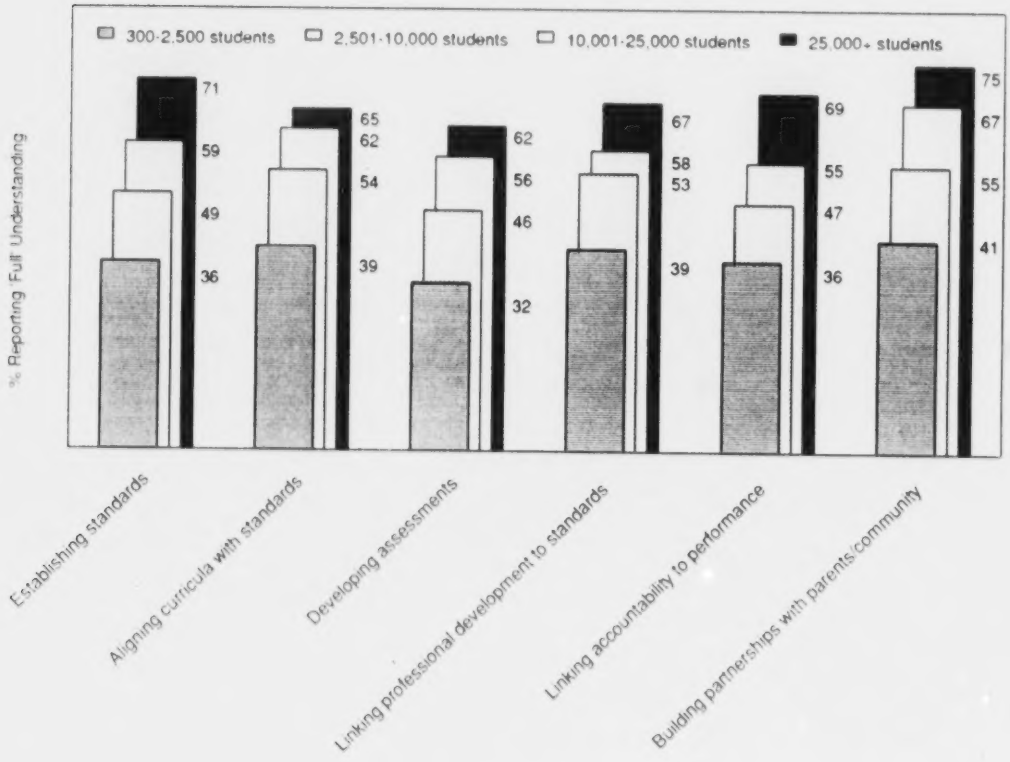
Chart 3.6

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Understanding by Size*

Q1a. Report the extent to which you understand what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district.



*See Table 3.2 for significance levels.

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Table 3.2 UNDERSTANDING, CHANGE, AND PROGRESS by District Size

Report the extent to which you UNDERSTAND what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district, how much CHANGE will be required to implement each component, and your actual progress in IMPLEMENTING each component.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Small[1] n=1135	Mid1[2] n=984	Mid2[3] n=382	Large[4] n=199
On Standards					
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'full' understanding of the elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	36	49 ***	59 ***	71 **
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	39	54 ***	62 **	65
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	32	46 ***	56 ***	62
	Linking professional development to standards	39	53 ***	58	67 *
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	36	47 ***	55 **	69 ***
	Building partnerships with parents/community	41	55 ***	67 ***	75 *
CHANGE *% of districts reporting 'a great deal' of change required to implement elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	15	20 **	22	21
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	18	23 **	21	20
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	30	39 ***	35	35
	Linking professional development to standards	21	23	21	25
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	24	30 ***	24 **	28
	Building partnerships with parents/community	18	18	12 **	12
PROGRESS *% of districts reporting 'a great deal' of progress implementing elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	24	27	34 **	41
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	21	27 **	31	31
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	14	18 *	26 ***	26
	Linking professional development to standards	17	23 ***	23	22
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	13	19 ***	24	34 **
	Building partnerships with parents/community	18	28 ***	37 **	48 **

Size is based on total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94

[1]Small= 300-2,500 students

[2]Mid1= 2,501-10,000 students. Tests differences between small and mid1 districts (std errors=2%).

[3]Mid2= 10,001-25,000 students. Tests differences between mid1 and mid2 districts (std errors=1% - 3%).

[4]Large= 25,000+ students. Tests differences between mid2 and large districts (std errors=2%-4%).

*** = $p < .001$ ** = $p < .01$ * = $p < .05$

Significance levels based on two-tail tests.

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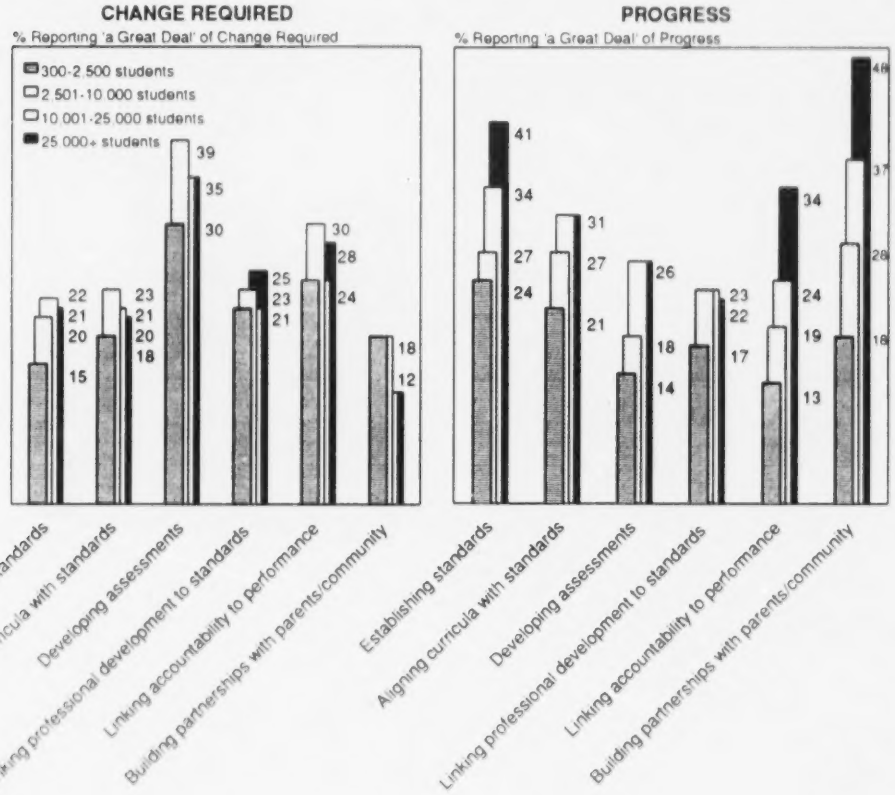
Smaller districts also reported less progress than larger districts on all elements of reform. (Chart 3.7) At the same time, they were less likely to think that reform required a 'great deal' of change which may be related to their limited understanding of standards-based reform.

Chart 3.7

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Change Required and Progress by Size*

Q1b&c. Report (b) how much CHANGE will be required to implement the following components of reform in your district; (c) your district's actual progress in IMPLEMENTING reform.



*See Table 3.2 for significance levels.

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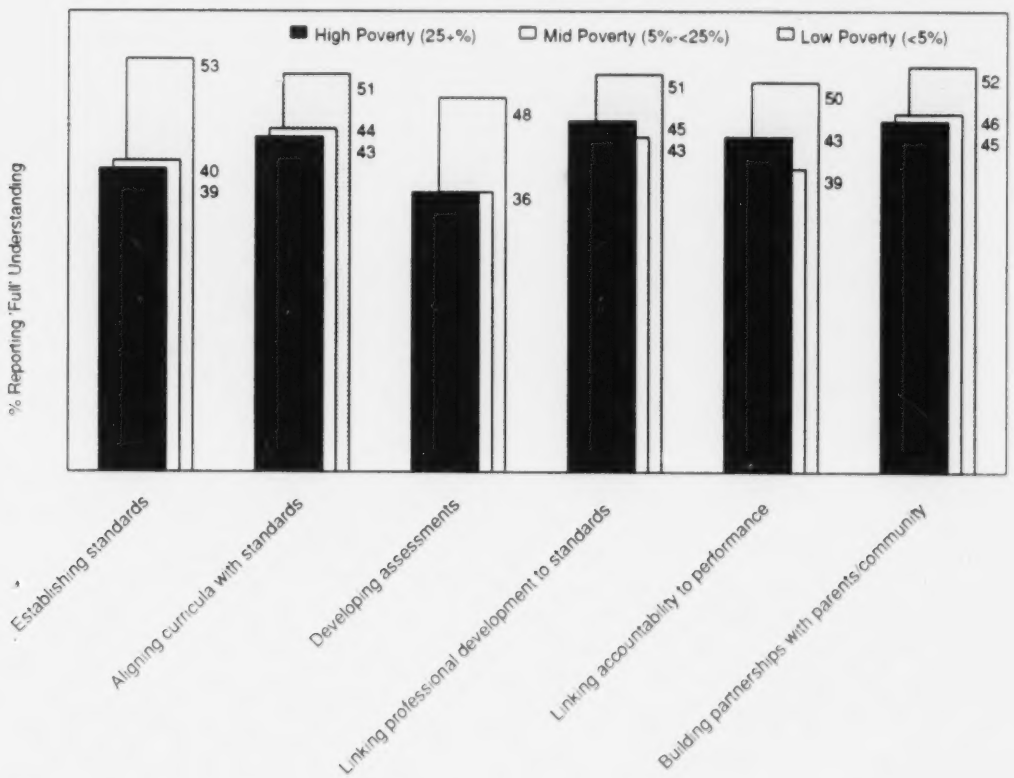
District Poverty. Survey results also show systematic differences by district poverty rates, i.e., the percentage of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census. In general, districts with the least poverty reported higher levels of understanding of standards-based reform than districts with greater poverty. (Chart 3.8; Table 3.3) They also reported that standards-based reform requires less change on their part than districts with higher poverty rates report. (Chart 3.9) Districts with the highest poverty rates, for example, were twice as likely as those with the least poverty to report that *establishing high content and performance standards* requires 'a great deal' of change (11% vs. 22%).

Chart 3.8

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Understanding by Poverty*

Q1a. Report the extent to which you understand what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district.



*See Table 3.3 for significance levels.

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Table 3.3 UNDERSTANDING, CHANGE, AND PROGRESS by Poverty

Report the extent to which you UNDERSTAND what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district; how much CHANGE will be required to implement each component; and your actual progress in IMPLEMENTING each component.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Low Poverty[1] n=381	Medium Poverty n=1820	High Poverty[2] n=499
On Standards				
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'full' understanding of the elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	53 ***	40	39
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	51 *	44	43
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	48 ***	36	36
	Linking professional development to standards	51 **	43	45
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	50 ***	39	43
	Building partnerships with parents/community	52 *	46	45
CHANGE *% of districts reporting 'a great deal' of change required to implement elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	11 *	16	22 *
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	15 *	19	25 *
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	32	33	33
	Linking professional development to standards	17 *	22	23
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	22	25	29
	Building partnerships with parents/community	12 ***	18	21
PROGRESS *% of districts reporting 'a great deal' of progress implementing elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	35 ***	24	22
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	27	23	23
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	17	15	18
	Linking professional development to standards	22	18	20
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	20 **	14	20 **
	Building partnerships with parents/community	29 **	22	19

Poverty is based on % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census.
Low Poverty= <5% Medium Poverty= 5% - <25% High Poverty=25+%

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests.

[1]Tests differences between low poverty and medium poverty districts (std errors=2%-3%)
[2]Tests differences between high poverty and medium poverty districts (std errors=2%-3%)

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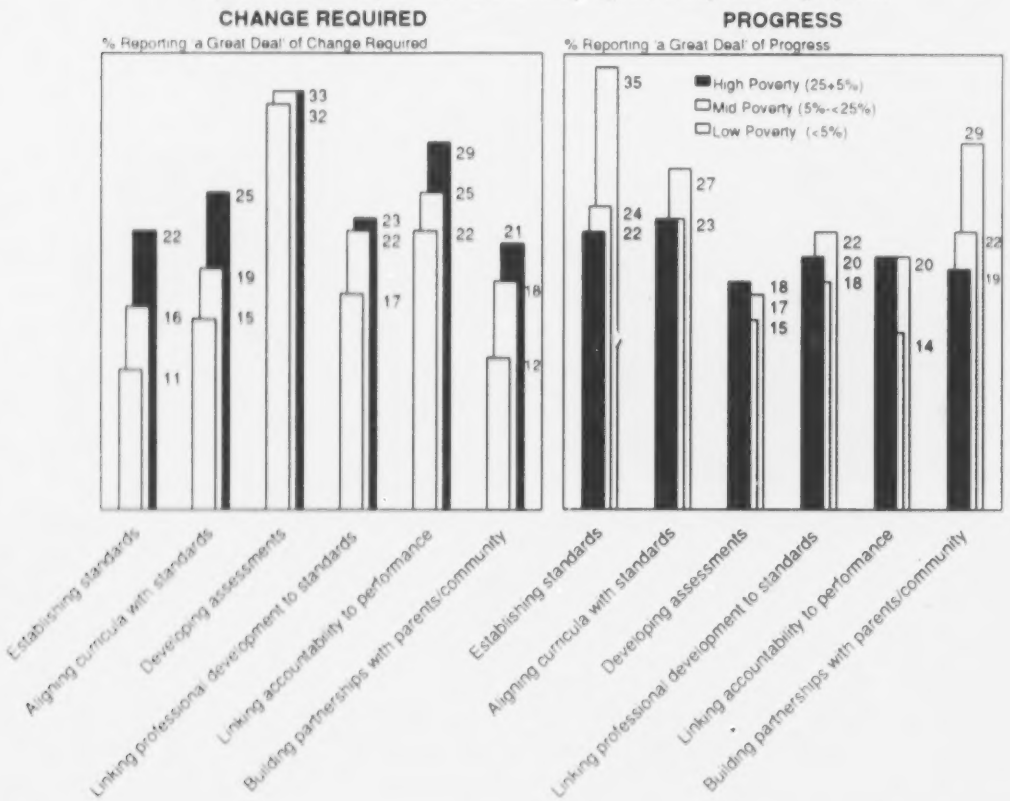
Low poverty districts also report more progress implementing some critical elements of reform than other districts. For example, 35 percent of districts with the lowest poverty reported making a 'great deal' of progress in establishing standards while only 22 percent of the highest poverty districts report the same. It is interesting to note that the highest poverty districts reported making greater progress in some areas - *developing assessments, linking professional development to standards and linking accountability to student performance* - than at least those in the mid-poverty range. (Chart 3.9) These differences could be related to the new accountability provisions in ESEA to which high poverty districts are particularly attuned. (Discussed later.) Still the strongest pattern here is that districts with the least poverty, districts that presumably also have relatively high levels of student performance, reported the highest levels of understanding and the most progress in standards-based reform and those with the highest poverty appear to be having trouble making progress in simply *establishing standards.*

Chart 3.9

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Change Required and Progress by Poverty*

Q1b&c. Report (b) how much change will be required to implement the following components of reform in your district; (c) your district's actual progress in implementing reform.



*See Table 3.3 for significance levels.

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Need for More Information on Standards-Based Reform

National Picture

Districts reports of the need for more information mirror the above findings. Nationally, districts were most likely (24%) to report needing a 'great deal' of information in *developing or adopting assessments*, the same area in which they reported the lowest level of understanding, the most required change, and the least progress. They were least likely to report needing a 'great deal' of information in *establishing standards* (15%) and *building partnerships* (16%). (Chart 3.10) Though not shown in the chart, about one-half to two-thirds of districts appear to be receptive to receiving information and assistance in reform as indicated by their reporting they need either 'some' or a 'great deal' of information depending on the particular area of reform. Responses ranged from 48 percent for *building partnerships with parents and community* to 65% for *developing or adopting assessments*. But put another way: about 40 to 50 percent of districts feel they need little, if any, information or assistance in most areas of standards-based reform.

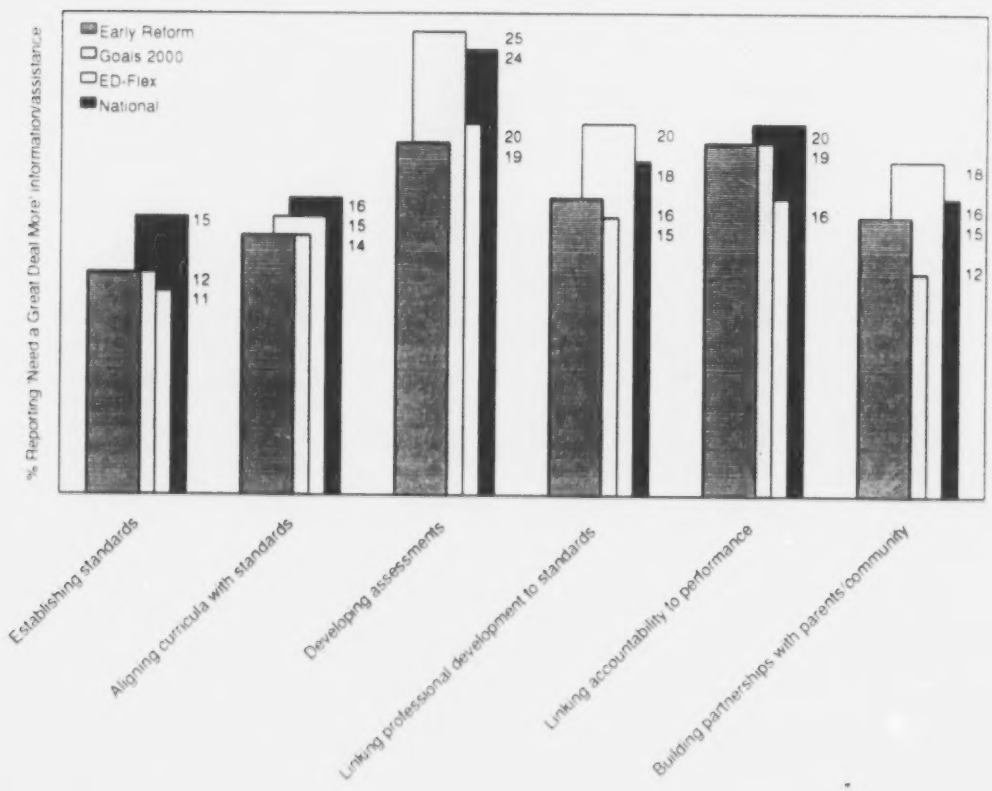
Policy Context

As we might expect, given the reports of understanding above, districts in 'early reform' states were less likely to report needing 'a great deal' of information in all areas of standards-based reform. Districts with Goals 2000 subgrants were also less likely to report needing much information in some areas, e.g., *establishing standards* and *building partnerships*. Interestingly enough, they were more likely to report needing a 'great deal' of information *developing assessments*, which suggests they may feel greater performance pressure in this regard, but may have less developmental help available than is probably available to districts in 'early reform' states. Districts in ED-Flex states also were less likely to report needing a 'great deal' more information in most, but not all, areas of reform.

Chart 3.10

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Need for More Information/Assistance by Policy Context*

Q16. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.



*See Table 3.4 for significance levels.

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Table 3.4 Need For More Information by Policy Context

Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Districts in Other States / Early Reform States[1] n=2486 / n=214	Other Districts / Goals 2000 Subgrant Districts[2] n=1389 / n=846	Districts in Other States / ED-Flex States[3] n=2181 / n=519
On Standards				
% of districts reporting 'need a great deal more information or assistance'	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	15 / 12	15 / 12	16 / 11 **
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	16 / 14	15 / 14	16 / 15
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	24 / 19	22 / 25	25 / 20 *
	Linking professional development to standards	18 / 16	17 / 15	17 / 20
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	20 / 19	19 / 19	22 / 16 **
	Building partnerships with parents and community	16 / 15	16 / 12 *	15 / 18
On Statutory Provisions				
% of districts reporting 'need a great deal more information or assistance'	Schoolwide programs through Title I	9 / 10	9 / 9	9 / 9
	Waivers of federal education provisions	27 / 29	24 / 27	28 / 22 **
	Consolidated planning for federal programs	19 / 17	18 / 17	19 / 20
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds	22 / 23	20 / 20	21 / 22
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural to student performance	18 / 17	17 / 14	18 / 17
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	18 / 17	16 / 16	18 / 15
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	17 / 13	15 / 15	17 / 13 *
	Developing school performance profiles	18 / 11 **	16 / 16	19 / 13 **
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	18 / 18	17 / 17	19 / 18

Early Reform States= KY, MD, & OR (std errors= 2%-3%)
1389 districts reported they do NOT have a Goals 2000 subgrant. 846 districts reported they do.
Other reports were treated as 'missing'. (std errors=1%-2%)
ED-Flex States= KS, MA, OH, OR, TX, & VT (std errors=1%-2%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

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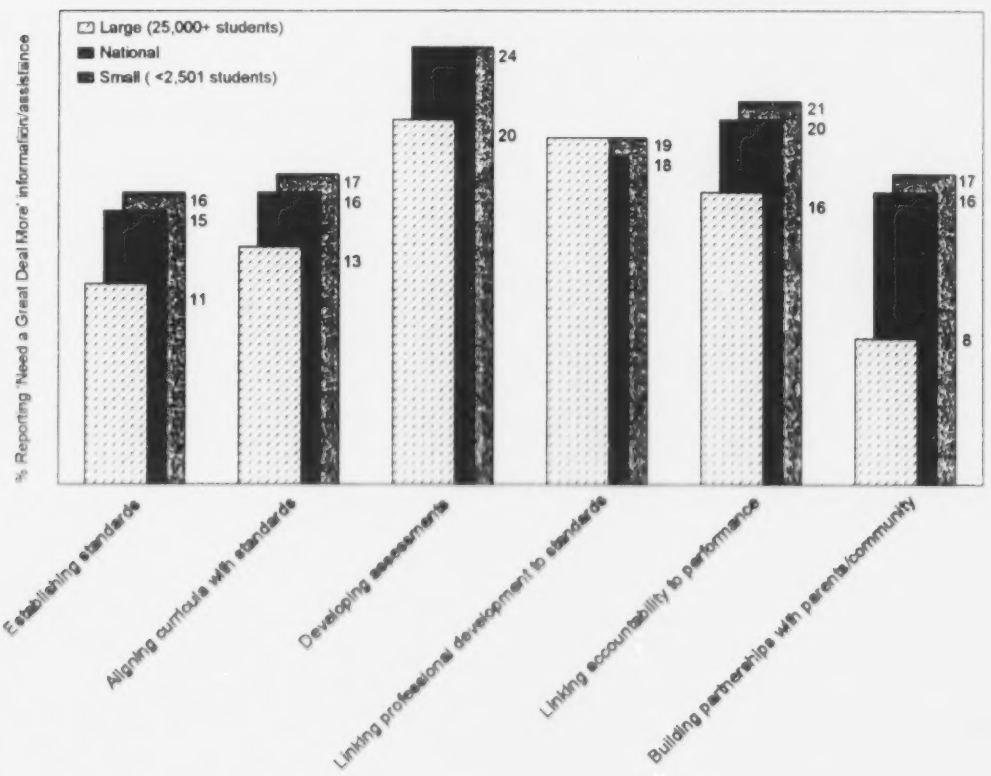
District Characteristics

District Size. Larger districts were less likely to report needing information on all elements of standards-based reform (Chart 3.11), as we might expect given earlier findings about larger districts and their level of understanding of, and progress in implementing, reform. One exception is linking *professional development to standards*, where the largest and smallest districts reported needing information at about the same rate. A possible explanation for the exceptional pattern on professional development is that the complex relationship with teachers unions typical in the largest district in the U. S. complicates reforms associated with the professional development of teachers.

Chart 3.11

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Need for More Information/Assistance by Size*

Q16. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.



*See Table 3.5 for significance levels.

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Table 3.5 Need For More Information by Size

Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Small[1] n=1135	Mid1[2] n=984	Mid2[3] n=382	Large[4] n=199
On Standards					
% of districts reporting 'need a great deal more info/assistance'	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	16	14	12	11
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	17	16	11 **	13
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	24	26	20 **	20
	Linking professional development to standards	19	17	13 *	19 *
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	21	20	16	16
	Building partnerships with parents and community	17	13 *	10	8
On Statutory Provisions					
% of districts reporting 'need a great deal more info/assistance'	Schoolwide programs through Title I	11	7 ***	3 ***	5
	Waivers of federal education provisions	28	25	17 ***	14
	Consolidated planning for federal programs	20	18	13 *	17
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds	22	22	18 *	18
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural to student performance	18	19	12 **	9
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	17	19	16	15
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	17	16	12	14
	Developing school performance profiles	18	19	13 **	9
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	18	19	17	17

Size is based on total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94

[1] Small= 300-2,500 students

[2] Mid1= 2,501-10,000 students. Tests differences between small and mid1 districts (std errors=1%-2%)

[3] Mid2= 10,001-25,000 students. Tests differences between mid1 and mid2 districts (std errors=1%-2%)

[4] Large= 25,000+ students. Tests differences between mid2 and large districts (std errors=2%-3%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

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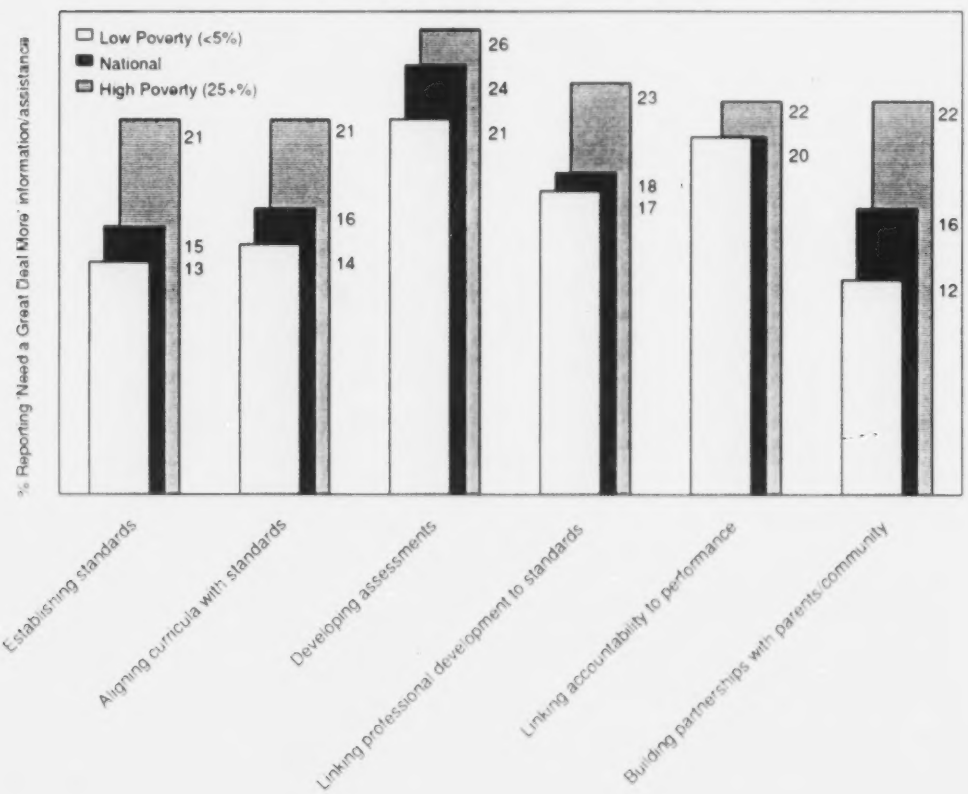
District Poverty. Districts with higher poverty were more likely to report greater need for information on all elements of standards-based reform, suggesting that they feel particularly pressured by reform. (Chart 3.12) This finding corresponds to results, noted earlier, of higher poverty districts reporting lower levels of understanding of, and greater change required by, standards-based reform.

Chart 3.12

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Need for More Information/Assistance by Poverty*

Q16. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.



*See Table 3.6 for significance levels.

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Table 3.6 Need For More Information by Poverty

Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Low Poverty[1] n=381	Medium Poverty n=1820	High Poverty[2] n=499
On Standards				
% of districts reporting 'need a great deal more info/assistance'	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	13	14	21 **
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	14	15	21 *
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	21	24	26
	Linking professional development to standards	17	17	23 **
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	20	20	22
	Building partnerships with parents and community	12	15	22 **
On Statutory Provisions				
% of districts reporting 'need a great deal more info/assistance'	Schoolwide programs through Title I	10	9	11
	Waivers of federal education provisions	22	27	27
	Consolidated planning for federal programs	17	19	22
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds	20	22	23
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural to student performance	14	18	21
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	17	18	18
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	14	17	17
	Developing school performance profiles	18	18	18
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	17	18	23 *

Poverty is based on the % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census

Low Poverty= <5% Medium Poverty= 5%-<25% High Poverty= 25+%

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05

Significance levels based on two-tail tests

[1]Tests differences between low poverty and medium poverty districts (std errors=2%-3%)

[2]Tests differences between high poverty and medium poverty districts (std errors=2%-3%)

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STATUTORY PROVISIONS

The survey also asked questions about new provisions associated with flexibility and accountability that are part of the ESEA as reauthorized in 1994. Respondents were asked about: 1) their level of understanding of each provision; and 2) the degree of difficulty associated with implementing the accountability provisions. The flexibility and accountability provisions identified in the survey are shown on the next page.

Flexibility Provisions	Accountability Provisions
Schoolwide programs through Title I	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools
Waivers of Federal education provisions	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels
Consolidated planning for Federal programs	Developing school performance profiles
Consolidation of Federal administrative funds	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate progress
Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	

The National Picture

The majority of districts reported 'reasonable' or 'full' understanding of the new statutory provisions in the 1994 ESEA legislation. The largest fraction of districts (85%) reported 'reasonable' or 'full' understanding for *schoolwide programs* and a low of 52 percent reported the same for *waivers*. At the same time, from 41 to 49 percent of the districts reported that implementing the new accountability provisions was either 'moderately' or 'very' difficult. Not surprisingly, *providing technical assistance to schools not making adequate yearly progress* was most often considered 'very' difficult by districts nationally (10%). (Chart 3.13)

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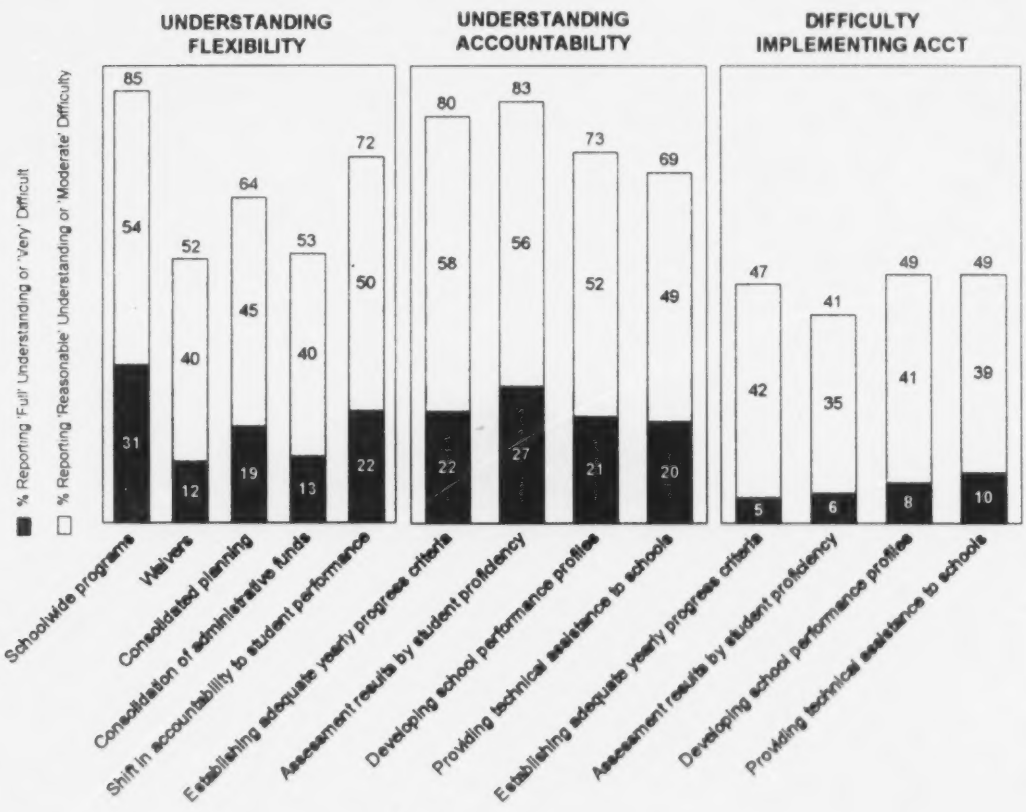
Chart 3.13

Level of Reported Understanding and Difficulty by Statutory Provision

Q2&3. For each provision identified, please rate the extent to which you understand the provision and the expected difficulty of implementing it in your district.



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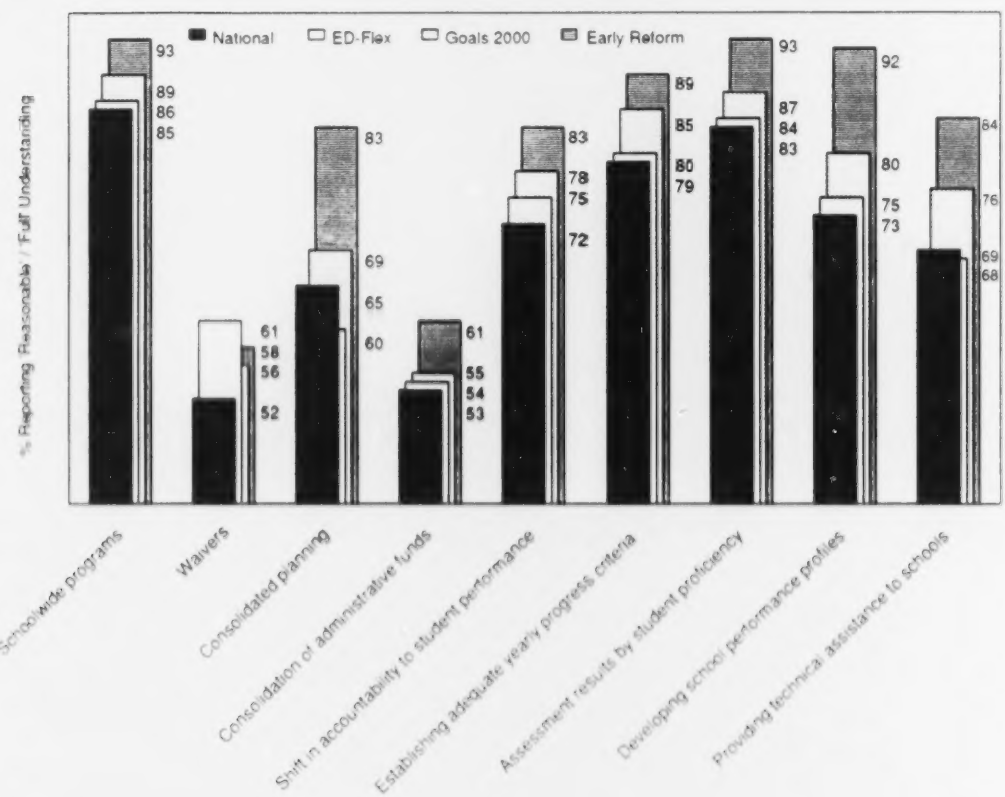
Differences by Policy Context

Similar to the findings for standards-based reform, districts in 'early reform' states and those districts with Goals 2000 subgrants generally reported higher levels of understanding of the new flexibility and accountability provisions in the ESEA legislation than other districts reported. (Chart 3.14; Table 3.7) Again, reports of districts in ED-Flex states were not much different from districts in other states, with the exception of *waivers* where districts in ED-Flex states, not surprisingly, reported greater understanding.

Chart 3.14

Statutory Provisions: Reported Understanding by Policy Context*

Q2&3. Rate the extent to which you understand the new Federal provisions.



*See Table 3.7 for significance levels.

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Table 3.7 UNDERSTANDING AND DIFFICULTY by Policy Context

Report the extent to which you UNDERSTAND the flexibility and accountability provisions, and the expected DIFFICULTY of implementing accountability provisions in your district.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Districts in Other States / Early Reform States[1] n=2486 / n=214	Other Districts / Goals 2000 Subgrant Districts[2] n=1389 / n=846	Districts in Other States / ED-Flex States[3] n=2181 / n=519
On Statutory Provisions				
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'reasonable' /'full' understanding of new federal provisions*	Schoolwide programs through Title I	85 / 93 ***	85 / 89 *	85 / 86
	Waivers of federal education provisions	51 / 58	53 / 56	49 / 61 ***
	Consolidated Planning for federal programs	64 / 83 ***	64 / 69 *	66 / 60 *
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds	53 / 61 *	54 / 55	53 / 54
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	72 / 83 ***	72 / 78 **	72 / 75
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	79 / 89 ***	79 / 85 ***	79 / 80
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	82 / 93 ***	82 / 87 *	82 / 84
	Developing school performance profiles	72 / 92 ***	72 / 80 ***	72 / 75
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	69 / 84 ***	68 / 76 ***	70 / 68
DIFFICULTY *% of districts reporting 'moderate' / 'very difficult' to implement new federal provisions*	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	47 / 49	44 / 50 *	48 / 44
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	41 / 41	39 / 39	43 / 43
	Developing school performance profiles	49 / 39 **	46 / 47	49 / 46
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	49 / 53	46 / 54 **	50 / 50

[1] Early Reform States= KY, MD, & OR (std errors=2%-4%).

[2] 1389 districts reported they do NOT have a Goals 2000 subgrant; 846 districts reported they do. Other reports were treated as 'missing.' (std errors=2%)

[3] ED-Flex States= KS, MA, OH, OR, TX, & VT (std errors=2%-3%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests.

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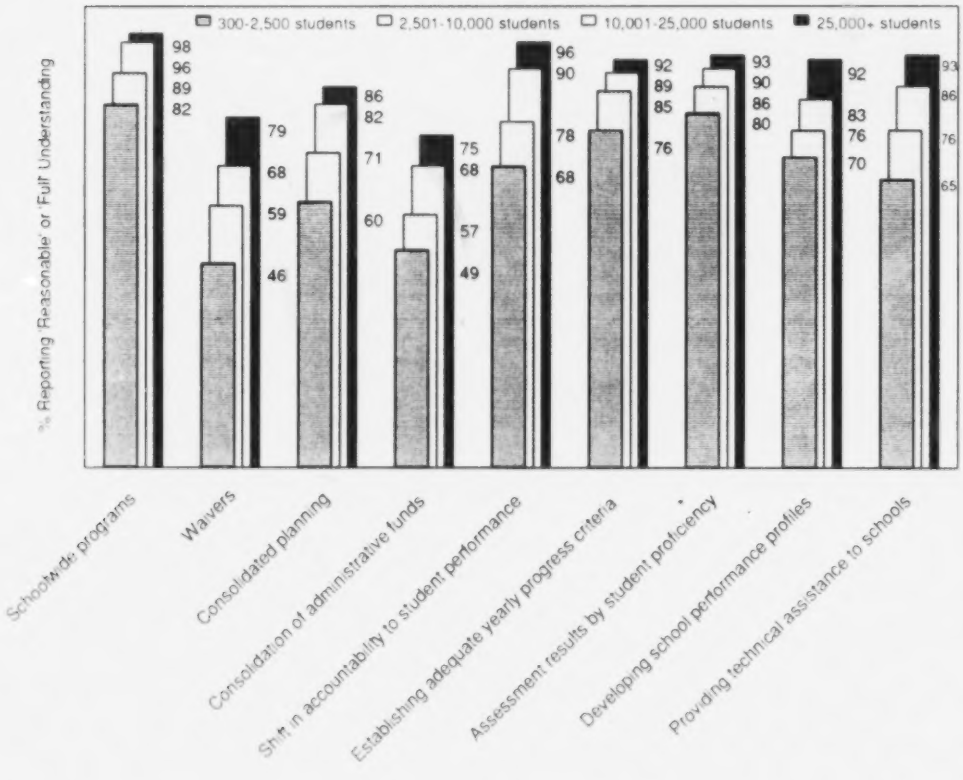
Differences by District Characteristics

District Size. District reports of understanding of new Federal provisions also increase steadily with district size. (Chart 3.15; Table 3.8) For example, while 46 percent of the smallest districts claim to have 'reasonable' or 'full' understanding of *waivers*, 79 percent of the largest districts make the same claim. Similarly, 65 percent of the smallest districts report 'reasonable' or 'full' understanding of what it means to *provide effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress*, but 93 percent of the largest districts report the same.

Chart 3.15

Statutory Provisions: Reported Understanding by Size*

Q2&3. Report the extent to which you understand the new Federal provisions



*See Table 3.8 for significance levels.

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Table 3.8

UNDERSTANDING AND DIFFICULTY
by District Size

Report the extent to which you UNDERSTAND the flexibility and accountability provisions, and the expected DIFFICULTY of implementing accountability provisions in your district.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Small[1] n=1135	Mid1[2] n=984	Mid2[3] n=382	Large[4] n=199
On Statutory Provisions					
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'reasonable'/'full understanding' of new federal provisions*	Schoolwide programs through Title I	82	89 ***	96 ***	98
	Waivers of federal education provisions	46	59 ***	68 **	79 ***
	Consolidated Planning for federal programs	60	71 ***	82 ***	86
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds	49	57 ***	68 ***	75
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	68	78 ***	90 ***	96 ***
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	76	85 ***	89 *	92
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	80	86 ***	90 *	93
	Developing school performance profiles	70	76 ***	83 **	92 ***
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	65	76 ***	86 ***	93 ***
DIFFICULTY *% of districts reporting 'moderately'/'very difficult' to implement new federal provisions*	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	48	45	48	44
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	42	40	40	40
	Developing school performance profiles	50	49	37 ***	31
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	50	51	45	43

Size is based on total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94

[1] Small= 300-2,500 students.

[2] Mid1= 2,501-10,000 students. Tests differences between small and mid1 districts (std errors=2%)

[3] Mid2= 10,001-25,000 students. Tests differences between mid1 and mid2 districts (std errors=1%-3%)

[4] Large= 25,000+ students. Tests differences between mid2 and large districts (std errors=2%-4%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests.

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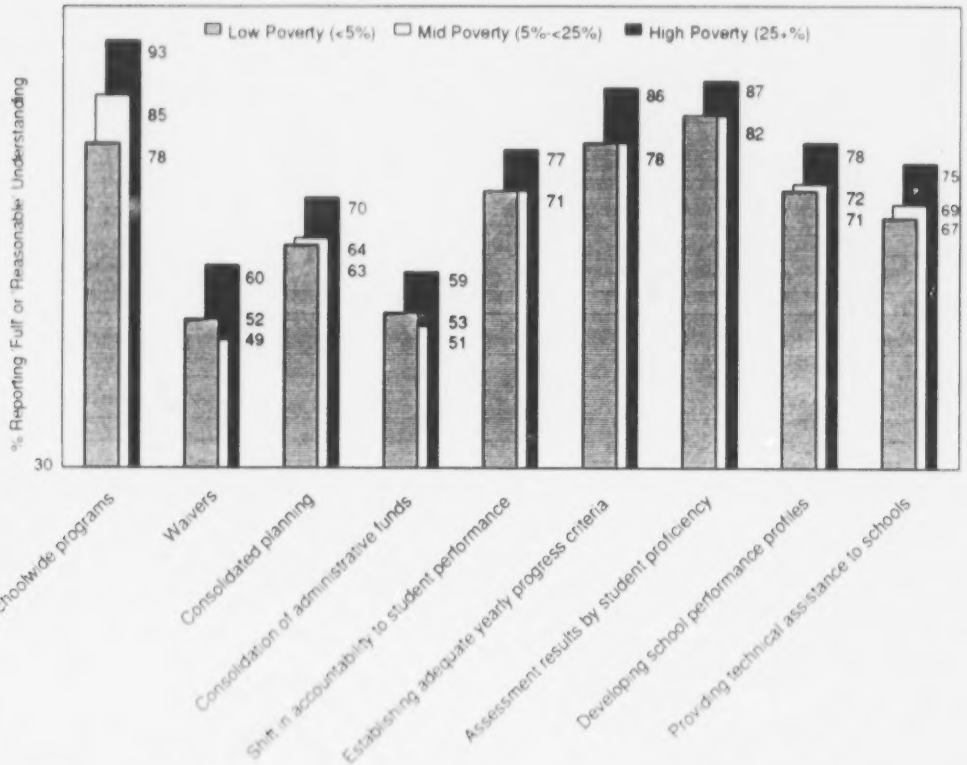
District Poverty. In contrast to the findings on standards-based reform reported earlier, high levels of poverty are associated with greater understanding of Federal provisions. Districts with the highest poverty rates show consistently higher levels of understanding of all Federal flexibility and accountability provisions associated with ESEA. Since these districts are the major beneficiaries of its funding, greater understanding of the new statutory provisions of ESEA is probably to be expected. (Chart 3.16; Table 3.9)

Chart 3.16

Statutory Provisions: Reported Understanding by Poverty*

Q2&3 Report the extent to which you understand the new Federal provisions.



*See Table 3.9 for significance levels.

Table 3.9

UNDERSTANDING AND DIFFICULTY by Poverty

Report the extent to which you UNDERSTAND the flexibility and accountability provisions, and the expected DIFFICULTY of implementing accountability provisions in your district

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Low Poverty[1] n=381	Medium Poverty n=1820	High Poverty[2] n=499
On Statutory Provisions				
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'reasonable' /'full' understanding of new federal provisions*	Schoolwide programs through Title I	78 **	85	93 ***
	Waivers of federal education provisions	52	49	60 ***
	Consolidated Planning for federal programs	63	64	70 *
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds	53	51	59 **
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	71	71	77 *
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	78	78	86 ***
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	82	82	87 **
	Developing school performance profiles	71	72	78 *
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	67	69	75 **
DIFFICULTY *% of districts reporting 'moderate'/'very' difficult to implement new federal provisions*	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	40 *	48	48
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	39	42	43
	Developing school performance profiles	46	50	47
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	41 **	51	50

Poverty is based on % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census.
Low Poverty= <5% Medium Poverty= 5%-<25% High Poverty= 25+%

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

[1]Tests differences between low poverty and medium poverty districts (std errors= 2%-3%)
[2]Tests differences between high poverty and medium poverty districts (std errors= 2%-3%)

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Need for More Information on Statutory Provisions

National Picture

Reports of need for more information again mirror other findings from the survey. Districts were least likely (9%) to report needing a 'great deal' of information about *schoolwide programs* and most likely (27%) to report needing a 'great deal' of information about *waivers*. Though not shown in the chart, with the exception of schoolwide programs, about 55 percent of districts in the country reported needing either 'some' or 'a great deal' of information or assistance with the new Federal provisions.

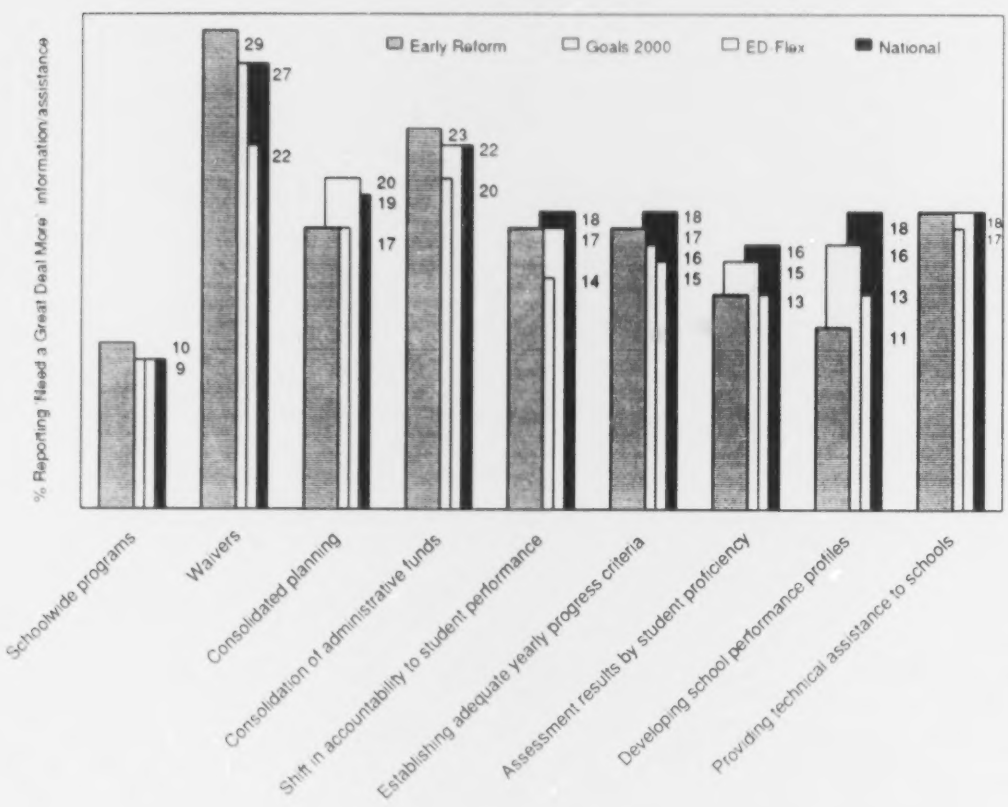
Differences by Policy Context

The biggest differences between districts in 'early reform' states and other districts were that those in 'early reform' states were less likely to report needing much information in *reporting assessment results by student proficiency level* (13% vs. 16%) and *developing school performance profiles* (11% vs. 18%). (Chart 3.17) The information needs of Goals 2000 districts were similar to the national picture, although these districts were somewhat more likely to want information on *waivers* and somewhat less likely to need information on shifting *accountability to student performance*. Districts in ED-Flex states also reported needing less information in a number of areas.

Chart 3.17

Statutory Provisions: Reported Need for Information/Assistance by Policy Context*

Q16. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.



*See Table 3.4 for significance levels.

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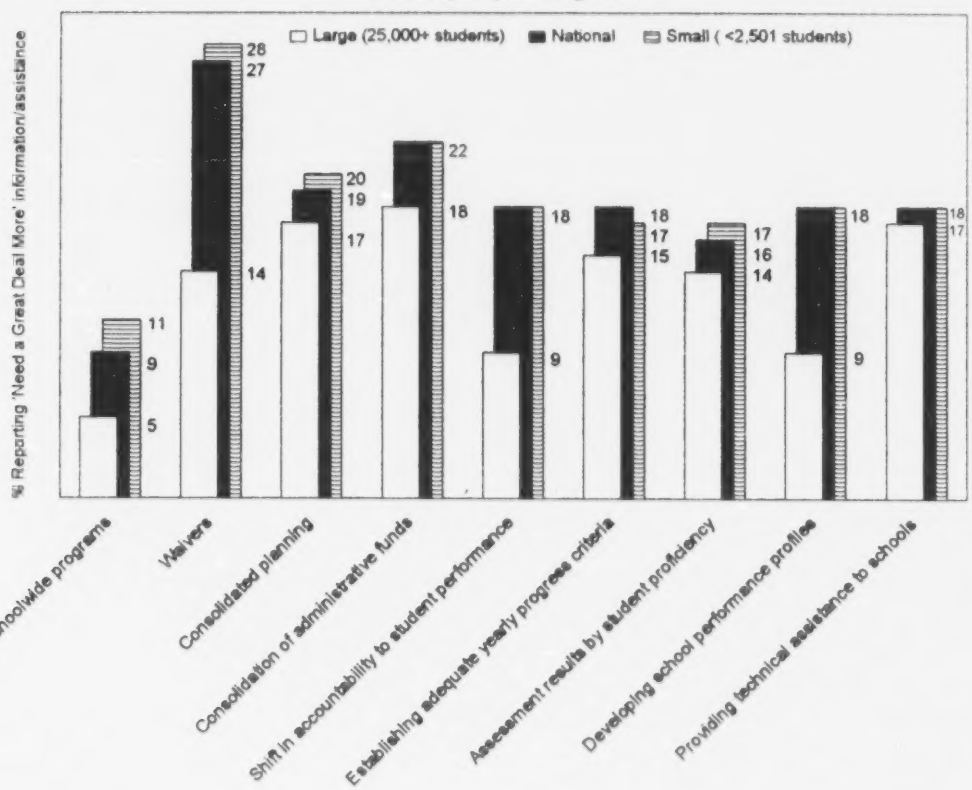
Differences by District Characteristics

District Size. Similar to the findings for standards-based reform presented earlier, larger districts were also less likely to report needing information on all Federal provisions (Chart 3.18), again not surprising given the overall pattern of findings for larger districts. For example, nearly twice the percentage of small districts (18.1%) as large districts (9.5%) report needing a 'great deal' of information about *developing school performance profiles.*

Chart 3.18

Statutory Provisions: Reported Need for More Information/Assistance by Size*

Q16. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.



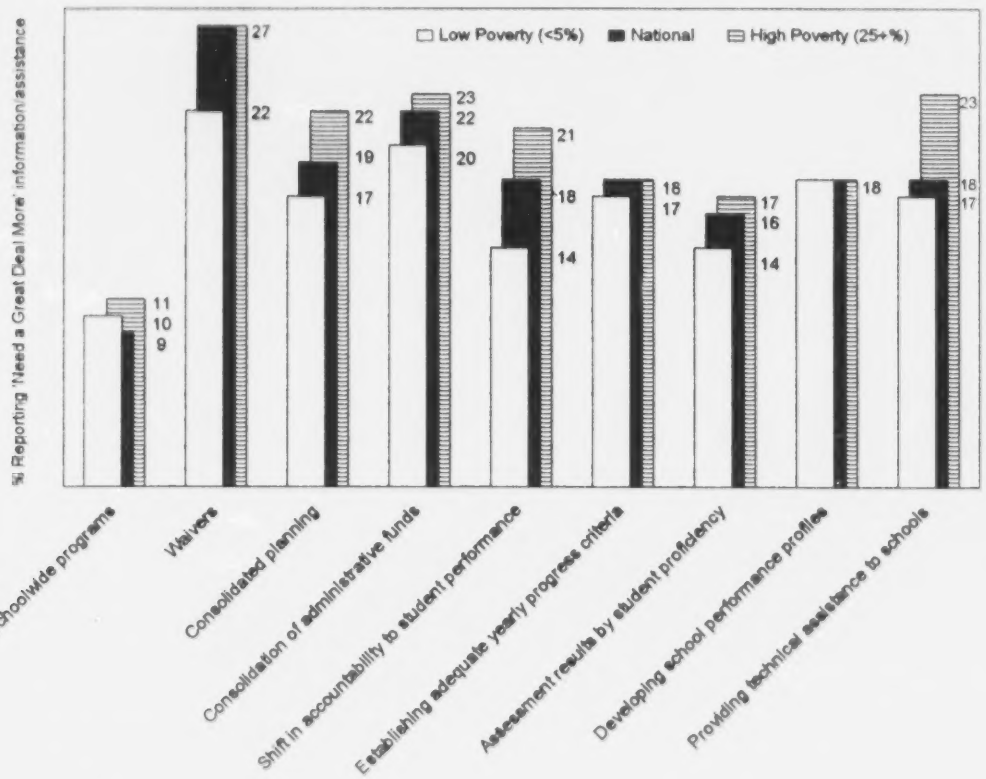
*See Table 3.5 for significance levels.

District Poverty. Interestingly, while high poverty districts' reported understanding of Federal provisions is generally higher than other districts (discussed earlier), they still report needing more information and assistance than other districts in some areas, particularly for providing *technical assistance to schools not making adequate progress.* (Chart 3.19) No doubt this finding stems from the fact that higher poverty districts generally have more severe student performance problems than other districts.

Chart 3.19

Statutory Provisions: Reported Need for More Information/Assistance by Poverty*

Q16. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.



*See Table 3.6 for significance levels.

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MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS

We also examined whether the relationships between districts' responses to the survey and district size, district poverty and the different policy environments held up when the other variables were included in the analysis. In other words, does district size still have an effect once we have taken district poverty into account. Or, does 'early reform' status still have an effect once we have taken district size into account. Table 3.10 shows results when district size, district poverty, 'early reform' status and whether a district was a Goals 2000 subgrant recipient were included simultaneously in a regression.[5]

As can be seen, most of the bivariate results presented earlier remain. District size persists as a consistent and strong predictor of both understanding of, change required by, and progress of reform, as well as understanding of new Federal provisions. Similarly, most of the effects of being in an 'early reform' state on understanding, change and reform progress remain. Many of the findings for the Goals 2000 subgrantees also persist. Their higher levels of understanding of reform remain significant in two elements of reform and their ratings of the amount of change required by reform remain essentially the same.

The effect of poverty is also similar to the bivariate results. Districts with higher poverty rates were less likely to report high levels of understanding of standards-based reform, but more likely to report high levels of understanding of Federal provisions. They were also more likely to report that reform required great change on their part and less likely to report they were making progress.

[5] In these analyses poverty and district size (log) are continuous variables. We standardize each of these variables by subtracting its respective mean so that the intercepts are estimates for districts with mean poverty and mean district size. 'Early reform' status and Goals 2000 subgrantee are dummy variables.

Table 3.10 UNDERSTANDING, CHANGE, PROGRESS, AND DIFFICULTY
Full Model

Report (A) the extent to which you UNDERSTAND what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district, how much CHANGE will be required to implement each component, your actual progress in IMPLEMENTING each component, and (B) the extent to which you UNDERSTAND the flexibility and accountability provisions, and the expected DIFFICULTY of implementing accountability provisions in your district

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Intercept[a]	Percent Poverty[1]	Districts w/Goals 2000 Subgrants[2]	Districts in Early Reform States[2]	Log of District Enrollmt[3]
(A) On Standards						
UNDERSTANDING	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	40.75	-0.24 *	6.49	7.52 *	7.76 ***
% of districts reporting 'full understanding' of the elements of standards-based reform	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	44.41	-0.18	3.49	7.06 *	7.77 ***
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	37.14	-0.26 **	4.30	8.89 *	8.88 ***
	Linking professional development to standards	43.27	-0.03	5.41 *	9.15 *	7.71 ***
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	41.79	0.03	0.79	11.38 **	7.00 ***
	Building partnerships with parents/community	45.07	-0.08	6.60 **	5.85	8.21 ***
CHANGE	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	13.73	0.27 ***	6.23 **	6.72 *	2.35 ***
% of districts reporting 'a great deal' of change required to implement elements of standards-based reform	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	16.17	0.35 ***	7.13 ***	7.03 *	1.59 *
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	30.44	0.002	7.14 **	0.36	4.16 ***
	Linking professional development to standards	20.51	0.01	2.36	6.13	0.01
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	23.02	0.16	5.38 *	9.44 **	1.88 *
	Building partnerships with parents/community	16.52	0.17 *	2.31	7.52 *	-0.31
PROGRESS	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	27.20	-0.29 **	-4.34 *	3.41	3.38 ***
% of districts reporting a great deal of progress implementing elements of standards-based reform	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	23.67	-0.18 *	-0.09	8.13 *	3.33 ***
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	16.10	0.05	-0.68	11.91 ***	3.50 ***
	Linking professional development to standards	18.51	-0.001	1.61	11.35 ***	2.81 ***
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	16.78	0.12	-3.28	11.22 ***	3.58 ***
	Building partnerships with parents/community	20.59	-0.21 **	3.90	0.71	5.79 ***
(B) On Statutory Provisions						
UNDERSTANDING	Schoolwide programs through Title I	85.68	0.40 ***	1.63	3.32	4.00 ***
% of districts reporting 'reasonable' /'full understanding' of new federal provisions	Waivers of federal education provisions	53.76	0.37 ***	-0.28	0.37	7.64 ***
	Consolidated Planning for federal programs	64.99	0.33 ***	0.77	15.60 ***	7.26 ***
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds	55.09	0.39 ***	-3.01	5.03	7.07 ***
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	72.93	0.27 **	2.10	6.29 *	7.20 ***
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	79.21	0.23 **	4.49 *	4.00	4.01 ***
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	82.64	0.14 *	2.97	6.67 **	2.39 ***
	Developing school performance profiles	72.22	0.20 *	5.70 **	13.91 ***	3.86 ***
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	69.10	0.27 **	3.89	8.10 **	7.25 ***
DIFFICULTY	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	44.10	0.16	5.24 *	3.51	-0.06
% of districts reporting 'moderately' / 'very difficult' to implement new federal provisions	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	38.65	0.05	5.85 *	-2.36	0.06
	Developing school performance profiles	45.73	-0.03	2.89	-4.93	-3.45 ***
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	45.83	0.08	7.88 **	4.69	-1.23

[a]The intercept is an estimate of the outcome given mean poverty and mean size

[1]Percent poverty= % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census (std errors=0.1% std errors=2%-3%

[2]Early Reform States= KY, MD, & OR (std errors=2%-4%)

[3]District enrollment= total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94 (std errors=0.6%-1%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

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Interactions

We also investigated the possibility of interaction effects, in particular whether the effects of size and poverty operate the same way in districts in 'early reform' states as they do in other districts. The findings show that some of the effects of district size and district poverty are moderated in 'early reform' states and that other effects are accentuated, as shown in Table 3.11.

The most interesting results center on reports of progress. District size has a positive association with progress in all states. However, larger size seems to have an even greater positive effect on progress in 'early reform' states, in particular progress in *establishing standards*, *developing assessments*, and *linking school/ district accountability to student performance*.

While we saw that poverty level has a negative association with progress for three of the six outcomes in Table 3.10, when we interact poverty status with 'early reform', we see in Table 3.11 that higher poverty is actually associated with more positive outcomes in 'early reform' states. That is, districts with higher levels of poverty in 'early reform' states are more likely to report progress in *establishing standards*, *developing assessments* and *linking school/ district accountability to student performance*.

Table 3.11 UNDERSTANDING, CHANGE, PROGRESS, AND DIFFICULTY

Interactions -- Early Reform*Size, Early Reform*Poverty

Report (A) the extent to which you UNDERSTAND what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district, how much CHANGE will be required to implement each component, your actual progress in IMPLEMENTING each component, and (B) the extent to which you UNDERSTAND the flexibility and accountability provisions, and the expected DIFFICULTY of implementing accountability provisions in your district

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Size[1]	Early Ref*Size[2]	Poverty[3]	Early Ref*Pov[4]
(A) On Standards					
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'full' understanding of the elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students				
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards				
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards				
	Linking professional development to standards			-0.05	0.62 *
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance				
	Building partnerships with parents/community				
CHANGE *% of districts reporting 'a great deal' of change required to implement elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students				
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards				
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	4.23 ***	-8.77 **		
	Linking professional development to standards				
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance				
	Building partnerships with parents/community	-0.21	-5.38 *		
PROGRESS *% of districts reporting 'a great deal' of progress implementing elements of standards-based reform*	Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	3.39 ***	6.55 *	-0.33 ***	0.84 **
	Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards				
	Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	3.28 ***	9.20 ***	0.02	0.93 ***
	Linking professional development to standards				
	Linking school/district accountability to student performance	3.63 ***	7.64 **	0.08	1.08 ***
	Building partnerships with parents/community				
(B) On Statutory Provisions					
UNDERSTANDING *% of districts reporting 'reasonable' 'full' understanding of new federal provisions*	Schoolwide programs through Title I	4.20 ***	-3.49 *		
	Waivers of federal education provisions			0.33 **	0.68 *
	Consolidated Planning for federal programs				
	Consolidation of federal administrative funds				
	Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance				
	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools			0.22 **	0.41 *
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels				
	Developing school performance profiles				
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress			0.26 **	0.44 *
DIFFICULTY *% of districts reporting moderate 'very difficult to implement new federal provisions*	Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools				
	Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels				
	Developing school performance profiles	-3.28 ***	-7.85 **		
	Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate yearly progress	-1.05	-6.05 *		

Early Reform States= KY, MD, and OR

[1] Size= total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94 (std errors=1%)
std errors=1%-3%

[2] Poverty= % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census (std errors=0.1%)
std errors=0.15%-0.44%

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

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WAIVERS

The Goals 2000, ESEA and School-to-Work legislation, all authorized in 1994, provide for the possibility of waivers from Federal regulation. We asked whether districts had requested any waivers, were planning to make a request, decided not to make a request, or were unaware of the provision. We also asked them to describe the substance of their request. We report responses to these questions here.

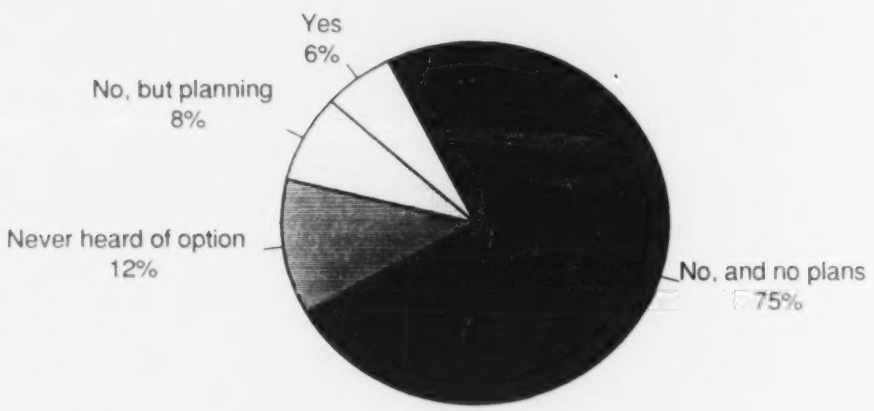
The National Picture

Chart 3.20 shows that the vast majority of districts (75%) in our sample have neither requested a waiver nor have plans to do so. Nearly twelve percent reported they had never heard of the waiver provision; only a little more than six percent of districts, including districts in ED-Flex states, reported they had actually requested a waiver. U.S. Department of Education records also show limited use of waivers; as of September 1996, only a little over two percent of districts had formally submitted waiver requests to the Department.[6]

Chart 3.20

Waiver Requests

Q7. Have you requested any waivers of Federal regulations?



N=2629

[6]Department counts do not include districts in ED-Flex states that applied directly to their state. Once we exclude districts in ED-Flex states, our survey estimates are only about 2 percent higher than ED's records.

Differences by District Type

Districts with higher poverty rates were more likely to report that they had requested or were planning to request a waiver, but the biggest differences can be seen across districts of different size. (Chart 3.21) The largest districts were 3 times as likely to request, or plan to request, a waiver as the smallest districts (36% vs. 11%). The smallest districts were also more likely to have never heard of the provision (14% vs. 1.5%). These findings conform to the general pattern of findings discussed earlier: large districts are more attuned to Federal program provisions. Not surprisingly, districts in ED-Flex states were more likely to take advantage of waivers than other districts.

Chart 3.21

Waiver Requests by District Type

Q7. Have you requested any waivers of federal education regulations?

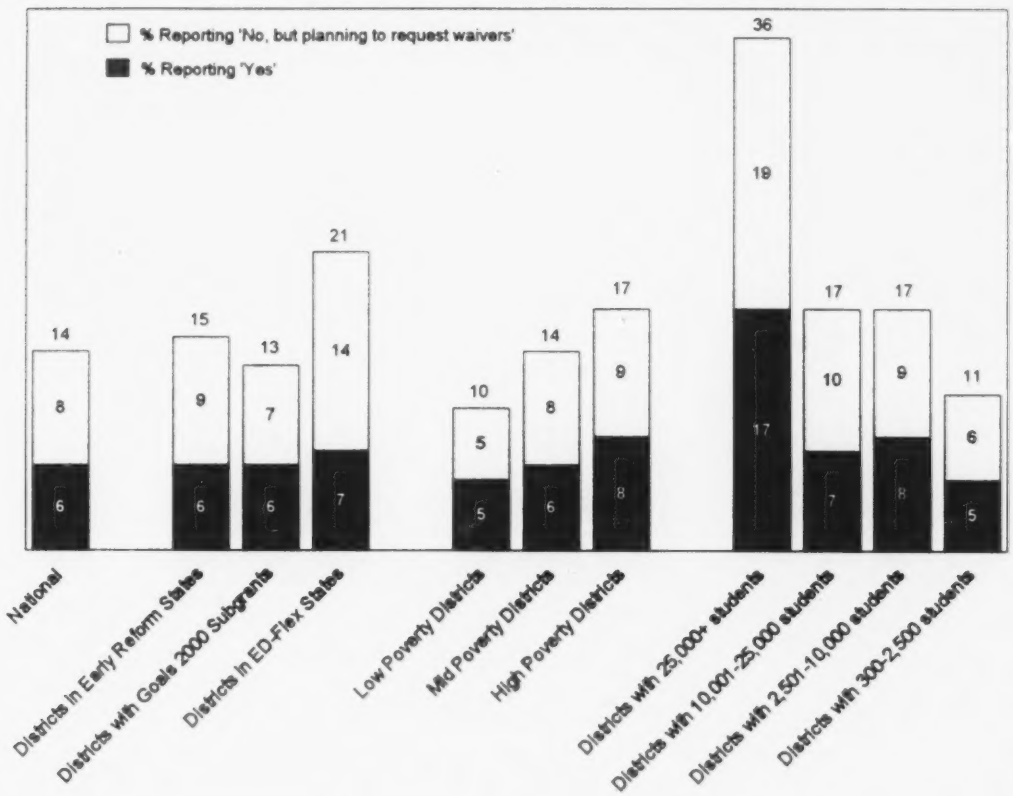


Table 3.12 shows the content of waiver requests for those instances in which districts reported it. As can be seen, the largest fraction of requests, by far, related to Title I. And the most likely Title I provisions which districts requested to waive were those concerned with:

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1) broadening eligibility for schoolwide programs; and 2) serving schools that would otherwise be ineligible for Title I. These findings are disturbing to the extent that they indicate a preference on the part of districts to spread Title I funding broadly, rather than targeting funding to the neediest.

Table 3.12 CONTENT OF WAIVER REQUESTS by District Type*

Q7. Have you requested any waivers of federal education regulations?

Percentages based on total N for each district category

PROGRAM waivers are requested under	TOTAL	POLICY CONTEXT †			DISTRICT SIZE ‡				DISTRICT POVERTY §		
		ED-Flex	Early Reform	Goals 2000 subgrants	300-2,500	2,501-10,000	10,001-25,000	25,000+	Low Poverty	Medium Poverty	High Poverty
Title I¶	158 (69%)	47 (78%)	11 (58%)	48 (64%)	34 (60%)	65 (74%)	27 (73%)	32 (68%)	9 (47%)	117 (73%)	32 (64%)
Eisenhower	14 (6%)	2 (3%)	4 (21%)	7 (9%)	9 (16%)	3 (3%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	8 (5%)	5 (10%)
Special Education	7 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	1 (1%)	4 (7%)	2 (2%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	4 (21%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)
ESL or Bilingual Education	5 (2%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	2 (2%)	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	2 (4%)
Charter Schools	1 (0.4%)	1 (2%)	1 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Perkins Vocational Education	1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
General Not limited to one specific program#	13 (6%)	6 (10%)	1 (5%)	4 (5%)	7 (12%)	3 (3%)	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	1 (5%)	11 (7%)	1 (2%)
Unspecified	7 (3%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	4 (5%)	1 (2%)	3 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	2 (4%)
Withdrawn‖	23 (10%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	9 (12%)	1 (2%)	9 (10%)	5 (14%)	8 (17%)	3 (16%)	12 (8%)	8 (16%)
TOTAL N Districts reporting purpose of waiver request or planned request	229	60	19	75	57	88	37	47	19	160	50

*For the 229 of 421 districts that submitted or planned to submit a waiver request AND described its content. All data are unweighted.

†Ns in these three columns will not add to Total N because policy context categories are not mutually exclusive and some districts do not fall in any of the three categories.

‡Size= total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94.

§Poverty= % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census.
Low Poverty= <5%. Mid Poverty= 5%-<25%. High Poverty= 25+%.

#Topics include: general regulatory relief, consolidation of programs or funding, teacher certification requirements, and paperwork reduction.

‖Determined by cross-referencing survey responses with U.S. Department of Education records of withdrawn waiver requests.

¶Breakdown of Title I requests (n=158):

Schoolwide Eligibility	41	(26%)
Serve Ineligible Schools	44	(28%)
Carryover >15% of funds	26	(16%)
Allocate <125%	20	(13%)
Higher Funding to Lower Poverty Schools	14	(9%)
Skip Eligible Schools	11	(7%)
Assessment	8	(5%)
Other	8	(5%)

(% add to more than 100 because some districts requested to waive more than one Title I provision.)

SUMMARY: IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORM

Nationally, districts reported high levels of understanding of all elements of standards-based reform, and the majority of districts reported 'reasonable' or 'full' understanding of the new flexibility and accountability provisions in the 1994 ESEA legislation. However, since a sizeable fraction of districts also reported that standards-based reform requires little or no change on their part, their levels of understanding of what reform actually entails may be somewhat misplaced.

Reports from districts that have presumably undertaken reform seriously -- districts in 'early reform' states and districts that have received Goals 2000 subgrants -- are different. These districts not only reported greater understanding and greater progress, they also reported that reform requires greater change. Their image of reform is probably closer to that of standards-based reform proponents. Reports from districts in the 'early reform' states suggest a clear and strong influence of state-level policies on district-level progress and further suggest that ED continue its efforts to encourage state initiatives.

Survey results also identified aspects of reform that appear to be lagging. Districts reported low levels of progress and a need for 'a great deal' of information in areas associated with *assessments* and *accountability*. Since these aspects of reform are critical linchpins in the reform process, if not the triggers for action, the findings direct ED to focus more assistance in these areas.

The findings also show that larger districts and those with higher rates of poverty differ vis-a-vis reform from other districts in possibly important ways. District size seems to be particularly consequential. Smaller districts appear to be at a distinct disadvantage relative to larger districts in terms of their level of understanding of elements of standards-based reform and Federal provisions and in the progress they are making. These differences can possibly be explained by additional findings, presented in the next section, that suggest that smaller districts are more isolated than other districts and function with few helpful sources of assistance.

The findings related to district poverty raise some possibly serious concerns for standards-based reform. Districts with the greatest poverty reported lower levels of understanding of standards-based reform, less progress in critical areas, and, at the same time, greater pressure for change. Findings in the next section show that the highest poverty districts are more likely to receive helpful assistance from state and Federal sources, but it may not be sufficient. High poverty districts were significantly more likely to report needing 'a great deal' more information on all aspects of standards-based reform. And while they appear to be particularly knowledgeable about the new Federal provisions, the success of Federal programs is directly linked to success with standards-based reform which seems to be dragging in high poverty districts relative to more affluent districts.

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ON SOURCES OF INFORMATION/ TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DISTRICTS

The *District Survey* also asked questions about the extent to which districts find various sources -- state, Federal and 'other' -- of information and assistance helpful in standards-based reform efforts and in understanding Federal statutory provisions. The questions were asked in order to provide ED with information on the use and effectiveness of different channels of communication to the local level so that it might better target its information dissemination and technical assistance efforts.

The National Picture

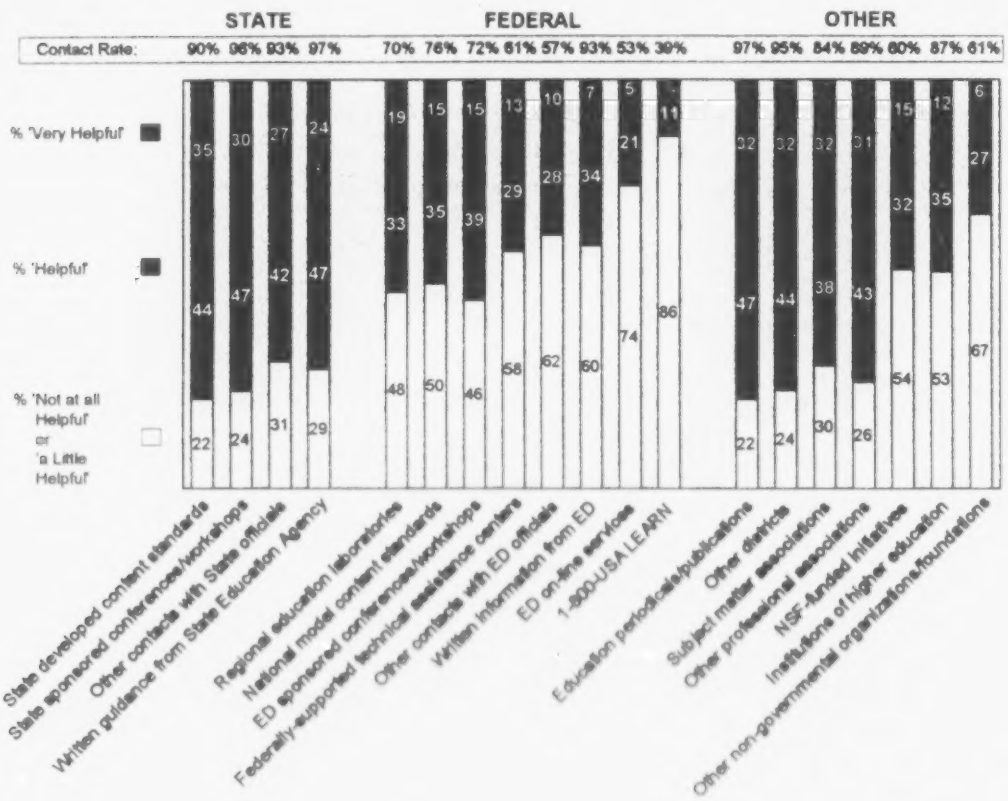
Districts reported they find state sources of information and technical assistance and 'other' sources of information and assistance (e.g., contacts with other districts, professional associations and especially education publications) most helpful in their reform efforts.[7] They find direct Federal sources less helpful. About three-quarters of districts surveyed considered every state source of assistance at least 'helpful' while more than half of the districts found most Federal sources 'not at all' or only 'a little' helpful. (Chart 3.22) Districts also reported much higher contact rates with state and 'other' sources of assistance than with Federal sources. To be fair, we should point out that administrators at the state level rely heavily on Federal help and reported it is 'very helpful', as discussed later. So the findings presented here do not necessarily mean that Federal assistance is not helpful to districts. Indeed, it may be very helpful, but it is passed to districts primarily through intermediaries.

[7] These ratings are only calculated for those cases in which districts reported having had contact with the information/ assistance source.

Chart 3.22

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Helpfulness of Sources of Information/Assistance*

Q12. How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform?


STATE
FEDERAL
OTHER
Contact Rate: 90% 96% 93% 97% 70% 76% 72% 61% 57% 93% 53% 39% 97% 95% 84% 89% 80% 87% 61%
% 'Very Helpful'
% 'Helpful'
% 'Not at all Helpful' or 'a Little Helpful'
35 30 27 24 19 15 15 13 10 7 5 11 32 32 32 31 15 12 6
44 47 42 47 33 35 39 29 28 34 21 86 47 44 38 43 32 35 27
22 24 31 29 48 50 46 58 62 60 74 22 24 30 26 54 53 67
State developed content standards
State sponsored conferences/workshops
Other contacts with State officials
Written guidance from State Education Agency
Regional education laboratories
National model content standards
ED sponsored conferences/workshops
Federally-supported technical assistance centers
Other contacts with ED officials
Written information from ED
ED on-line services
1-800-USA LEARN
Education periodicals/publications
Other districts
Subject matter associations
Other professional associations
NSF-funded initiatives
Institutions of higher education
Other non-governmental organizations/foundations

*Based on responses that had contact.

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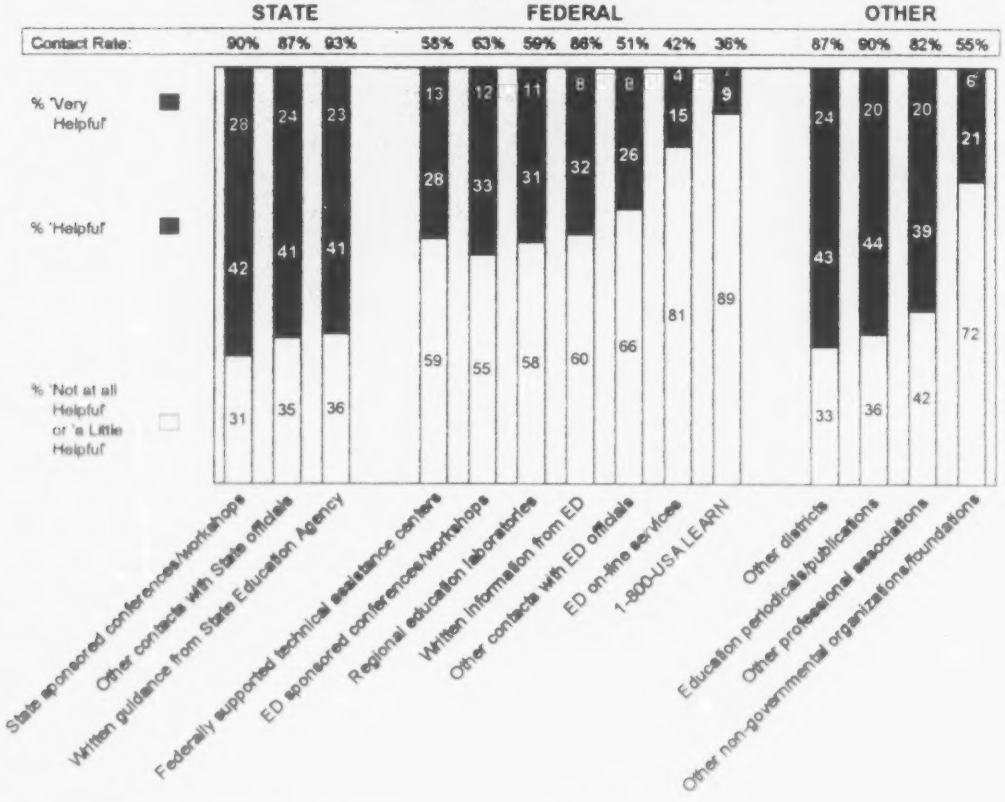
The same pattern of responses holds for information and technical assistance regarding new Federal statutory provisions: State and 'other' sources of assistance are most helpful and Federal sources are reportedly least helpful to districts. (Chart 3.23) Again we see that districts are more likely to have contact with state and 'other' sources of assistance than with Federal sources.

Chart 3.23

Statutory Provisions: Reported Helpfulness of Sources of Information/Assistance*

Q13. How helpful have each of the following sources of information been to your understanding of the new Federal provisions?


STATE
FEDERAL
OTHER
Contact Rate:
90% 87% 93% 58% 63% 59% 86% 51% 42% 36% 87% 90% 82% 55%
% 'Very Helpful'
% 'Helpful'
% 'Not at all Helpful' or 'a Little Helpful'
28 24 23 13 12 11 8 8 4 7 24 20 20 6
42 41 41 28 33 31 32 26 15 9 43 44 39 21
31 35 36 59 55 58 60 66 81 89 33 36 42 72
State sponsored conferences/workshops
Other contacts with State officials
Written guidance from State Education Agency
Federally supported technical assistance centers
ED sponsored conferences/workshops
Regional education laboratories
Written information from ED
Other contacts with ED officials
ED on-line services
1-800-USA LEARN
Other districts
Education periodicals/publications
Other professional associations
Other non-governmental organizations/foundations

*Based on responses that had contact.

These findings are not surprising. Federal programs, for the most part, are funded through states, and districts rely heavily on states for direction. Indeed, the results support ED's strategy to work through states, as it does with both Goals 2000 and Title I. Further support for the success of this strategy is presented later in this report with results that show that state officials rely heavily on Federal sources of information and assistance both for standards-based reform and for Federal programs and reported they find them 'very helpful'. The district-level findings also suggest that ED continue to use regionally-based and professional associations as channels of information dissemination to the field. The consistently high rating given to education periodicals and publications, a somewhat surprising finding, suggests that ED should perhaps take fuller advantage of existing education publications that apparently transmit information effectively to local decision makers.

Differences by Policy Context

Early Reform States. Table 3.13 shows that districts in 'early reform' states find all state sources of information and assistance -- written guidance, conferences, state content standards and other state contacts -- more helpful in their standards-based reform efforts than districts in other states. These district-level assessments suggest that 'early reform' states do, indeed, play a stronger leadership role in education reform than their counterparts. The ratings of the helpfulness of both Federal and 'other' sources by districts in 'early reform' states, with few exceptions, were not much different from the ratings of other districts. Ratings of helpfulness of most sources of assistance regarding new Federal provisions by 'early reform' states were also not much different from other districts, again with a few exceptions.

Goals 2000 Subgrant Districts. Responses of districts that received Goals 2000 subgrants show a different pattern of response. While districts that received Goals 2000 subgrants found some state sources more helpful than other districts, they found most Federal sources of assistance and information as well as 'other' sources significantly more helpful than districts without such grants. These results suggest that districts with Goals 2000 subgrants may be more nationally oriented than other districts. Unlike districts in 'early reform' states, Goals 2000 districts also reported most sources of assistance - whether state, Federal or 'other' - more helpful for understanding new Federal provisions than other districts reported. These findings suggest that Goals 2000 subgrant districts are particularly attuned to information on Federal programs regardless of source. It is impossible with the data we have available to distinguish whether the differences in the apparent orientation of Goals 2000 districts is a consequence of their receiving subgrants or the reason they were able to acquire the grants in the first place.

ED-Flex States. Districts in ED-Flex states show a mixed pattern of response. They, too, appear to find some state sources more helpful than other districts, but not as consistently or to the same extent as districts in 'early reform' states. They also appear to find some Federal sources significantly less helpful than other districts for both standards-based reform and new Federal provisions. These findings may suggest that districts in ED-Flex states function more on their own, that is, in a more independent and less-connected way than many other districts.

Table 3.13 SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE by Policy Context

How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you (A) understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform, or (B) understand the new flexibility and accountability provisions in the federal legislation?

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Districts in Other States / Early Reform States[1] n=2486 / n=214	Other Districts / Goals 2000 Subgrant Districts[2] n=1389 / n=846	Districts in Other States / ED-Flex States[3] n=2181 / n=519
(A) On Standards				
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for standards-based reform*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	24 / 34 **	23 / 27	22 / 32 ***
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	29 / 37 *	29 / 32	28 / 34 *
	State developed content standards	34 / 53 ***	34 / 41 **	32 / 44 ***
	Other contacts with state officials	26 / 35 **	25 / 33 ***	26 / 28
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful in implementing standards-based reform*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education (ED)	7 / 5	7 / 8	7 / 6
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	15 / 15	14 / 20 **	15 / 14
	ED on-line services	5 / 9	3 / 9 **	5 / 5
	1-800-USA-LEARN	3 / 3	1 / 7 **	3 / 0 40 ***
	Other contacts with ED officials	10 / 11	8 / 16 ***	12 / 5 ***
	National model content standards	15 / 18	11 / 25 ***	16 / 12 *
	Regional Education Laboratories	19 / 20	17 / 23 **	19 / 20
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	13 / 21 *	11 / 17 **	14 / 10 *
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful in implementing standards-based reform*	National Science Foundation-funded initiative	15 / 19	12 / 20 ***	16 / 12
	Subject matter associations	32 / 39 *	28 / 41 ***	33 / 28 *
	Other professional associations	31 / 28	28 / 38 ***	32 / 27
	Education periodicals/publications	32 / 34	29 / 40 ***	31 / 34
	Institutions of higher education	12 / 14	10 / 15 ***	11 / 15
	Other districts	32 / 35	31 / 34	32 / 31
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	6 / 7	5 / 9 *	6 / 6
(B) On Statutory Provisions				
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for new federal provisions*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	23 / 31 **	22 / 27 *	22 / 26
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	27 / 28	26 / 33 **	27 / 29
	Other contacts with state officials	24 / 28	22 / 30 **	25 / 21
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for understanding new federal provisions*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education (ED)	8 / 9	8 / 11	9 / 7
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	12 / 17	11 / 16 *	13 / 9 *
	ED on-line services	3 / 11 **	1 / 9 ***	4 / 3
	1-800-USA-LEARN	2 / 3	1 / 5	3 / 1
	Other contacts with ED officials	8 / 10	6 / 13 ***	9 / 3 ***
	Regional Education Laboratories	11 / 9	9 / 16 ***	10 / 15 *
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	12 / 17	10 / 19 ***	13 / 11
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for understanding new federal provisions*	Other professional associations	20 / 24	18 / 23 *	20 / 18
	Education periodicals/publications	20 / 21	19 / 25 **	20 / 21
	Other districts	24 / 28	23 / 27	25 / 21
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	6 / 9	6 / 8	6 / 7

Early Reform States= KY, MD, and OR (std errors= 2%-3%)

[1] 1389 districts reported they do NOT have a Goals 2000 subgrant. 846 districts reported they do. Other reports were treated as "missing" (std errors= 1%-2%)

[2] ED-Flex States= KS, MA, OH, OR, TX, and VT (std errors= 1%-3%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

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Differences by District Characteristics

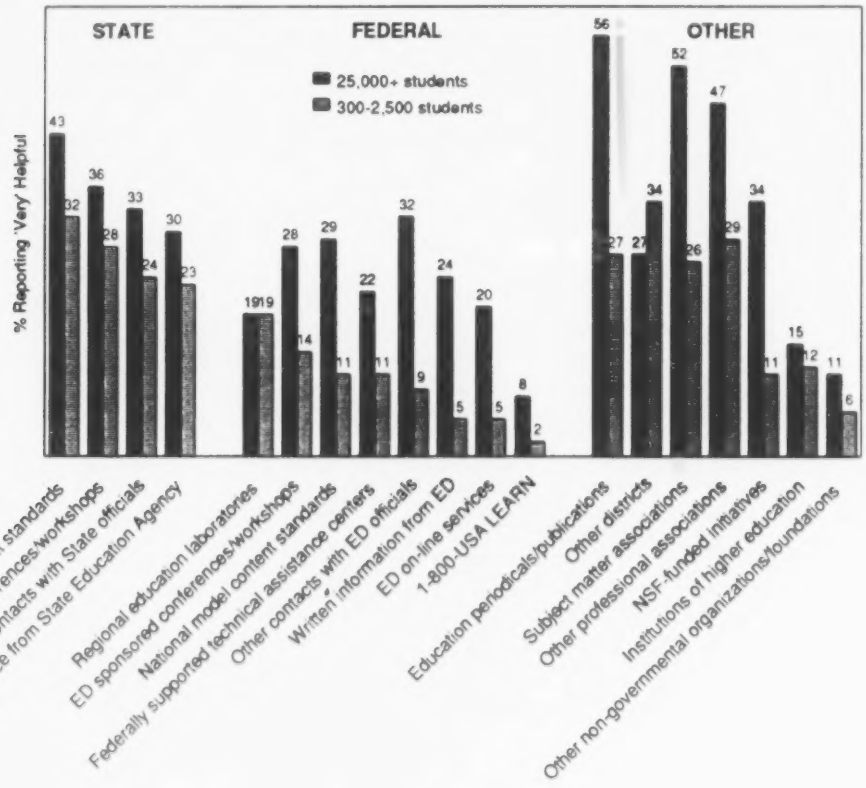
District Size. One of the main reasons, suggested by our analysis, that larger districts report higher levels of understanding of both elements of standards-based reform and Federal provisions, more progress, and less need for information is that larger districts, on average, appear to be better connected to almost all sources of information and technical assistance. Chart 3.24 shows the percentage of the largest and the smallest districts reporting various sources of assistance 'very helpful'. As is clearly evident, the largest districts appear to be able to take fuller advantage of almost all sources of assistance. In fact, the findings suggest smaller districts tend to be sorting out reform more or less on their own. For example, the largest districts find *subject matter associations* and *education periodicals* 'very helpful' for standards-based reform at twice the rate as the smallest districts (52% vs. 26%; 56% vs. 27%).

Table 3.14 also shows that nearly one-third (32%) of the largest districts find *other contacts with Federal officials* 'very helpful' in standards-based reform while only 9 percent of the smallest districts report the same.

Chart 3.24

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Helpfulness of Sources of Information/Assistance by Size*

Q12. How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform?



The large districts are also considerably more likely to find Federal officials 'very helpful' regarding statutory provisions than the small districts (30% vs. 6 %). (Table 3.14; Chart 3.25) Even more striking is the finding that the largest districts find *written information from ED* 'very helpful' at nearly six times the rate of the smallest districts (35% vs. 6%)!

*See Table 3.14 for significance levels.

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Table 3.14

SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE
by District Size

How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you (A) understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform or (B) understand the new flexibility and accountability provisions in the federal legislation?

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Small[1] n=1135	Mid1[2] n=984	Mid2[3] n=382	Large[4] n=199
(A) On Standards					
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting 'very helpful' for standards-based reform*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	23	25	31 *	30
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	28	31	33	36
	State developed content standards	32	39 ***	39	43
	Other contacts with State officials	24	30 **	36 *	33
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting 'very helpful' in implementing standards-based reform*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education (ED)	5	8 **	15 ***	24 *
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	14	15	20	28 *
	ED on-line services	5	4	6	20 ***
	1-800-USA-LEARN	2	2	8 *	8
	Other contacts with ED officials	9	11	16 *	32 ***
	National model content standards	11	21 ***	25	29
	Regional Education Laboratories	19	17	23	19
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	11	16 **	23 **	22
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting 'very helpful' in implementing standards-based reform*	National Science Foundation-funded initiatives	11	20 ***	22	34 *
	Subject matter associations	26	41 ***	46	52
	Other professional associations	29	33 *	36	47 **
	Education periodicals/publications	27	39 ***	46 *	56 *
	Institutions of higher education	12	11	14	15
	Other districts	34	29 *	27	27
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	6	6	11 *	11
(B) On Statutory Provisions					
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting 'very helpful' for new federal provisions*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	20	26 **	37 ***	38
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	24	33 ***	37	45
	Other contacts with State officials	20	28 ***	35 *	42
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting 'very helpful' for understanding new federal provisions*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education (ED)	6	11 ***	19 ***	35 ***
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	9	14 **	24 ***	33 *
	ED on-line services	3	3	4	20 ***
	1-800-USA-LEARN	2	2	4	11
	Other contacts with ED officials	6	10 **	14	30 ***
	Regional Education Laboratories	10	13 *	17	18
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	9	17 ***	19	21
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting 'very helpful' for understanding new federal provisions*	Other professional associations	16	25 ***	24	36 **
	Education periodicals/publications	17	25 ***	30	38 *
	Other districts	25	23	26	24
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	6	6	10	16

Size is based on total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data 1993-94

[1] Small= 300-2,500 students

[2] Mid1= 2,501-10,000 students. Tests differences between small and mid1 districts (std.errors=1%-2%)

[3] Mid2= 10,001-25,000 students. Tests differences between mid1 and mid2 districts (std.errors=1%-3%)

[4] Large= 25,000+ students. Tests differences between mid2 and large districts (std.errors= 3%-4%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

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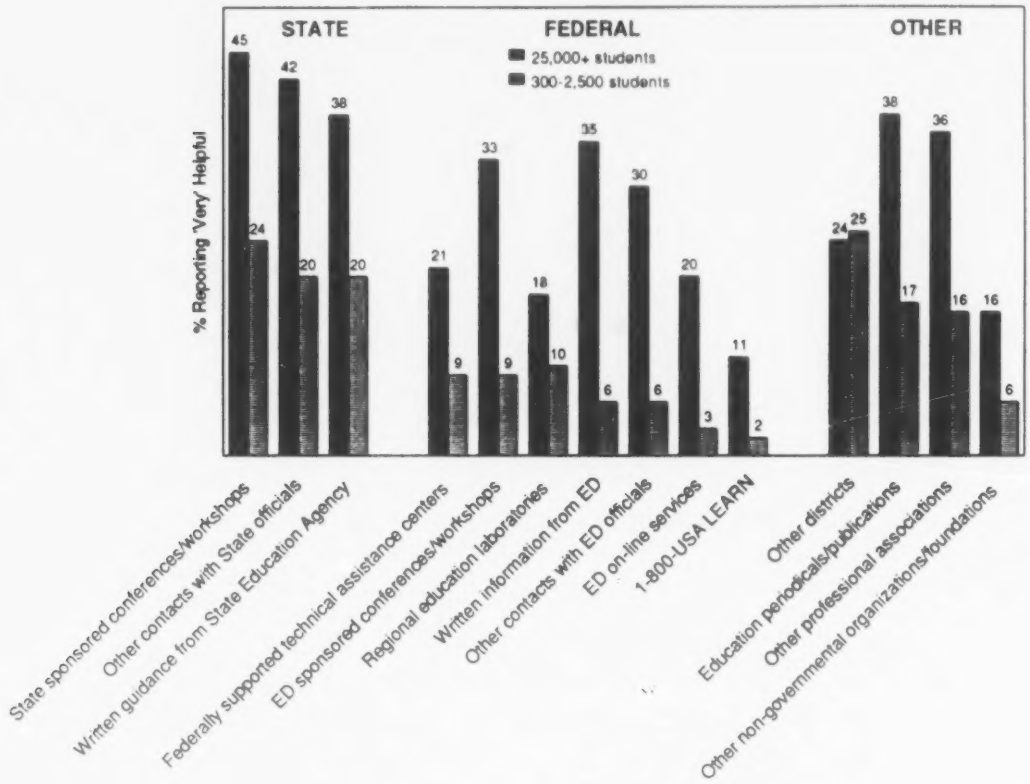
Chart 3.25

Statutory Provisions: Reported Helpfulness of Sources of Information/Assistance by Size*

Q13. How helpful have each of the following sources of information been to your understanding of the new Federal provisions?



There are two explanations for the 'helpfulness' findings on district size. The first is that larger districts have greater capacity to take advantage of various sources of information. For example, larger districts - due in some part to economies of scale - are more likely to be able to employ specialists who track policy initiatives and maintain a liaison with outside agencies. In organization theory such actors are referred to as "boundary spanners." The second explanation is that the various providers of assistance direct more of their effort to the largest districts and tend to ignore the small ones. Given limited resources this might be considered a rational strategy for technical assistance providers; the largest districts (enrollment > 25,000) represent only 1.4

*See Table 3.14 for significance levels.

percent of districts in the country but nearly 30 percent (29.9 %) of the student population.[8] By targeting relatively few districts, providers can reach a large fraction of the student population. Both of these explanations -- differences in local capacity to absorb information and differences in the targeting of assistance -- probably have some validity.

The finding that the small districts are considerably less likely to find *written information from ED* helpful, however, suggests that the information and assistance providers cannot be held overly responsible for the apparent predicament of the small districts. ED routinely sends its written guidance and other information to all districts so, at least in this instance, the problem is not simply one of ED paying more attention to the largest districts. All districts are treated the same.[9] To the extent that the problem is one of capacity in small districts -- not having a knowledgeable person with time to attend to the available sources of information -- solutions at the Federal level are not obvious. At the same time, since the smallest districts (< 2500 student enrollment) account for 72 percent of the districts in the United States and nearly 20 percent (19.7%) of the students, the situation cannot be ignored.[10]

While we do not have information to go the next step and determine whether larger districts effectively transmit information and assistance to schools, the findings clearly show that central administrators in larger districts feel that they have a better understanding of reform, are making more reform progress, and have more helpful sources of assistance and information than central administrators in smaller districts.

District Poverty. Differences across districts with different poverty levels in the sources of information and assistance that they find helpful are interesting. Districts with higher levels of poverty are significantly more likely to find state and Federal sources 'very helpful' while districts with lower levels of poverty are significantly more likely to find 'other' sources of assistance 'very helpful'. (Table 3.15) The stronger relationship between high poverty districts with state/ Federal sources is no doubt related to greater dependency of these districts on state and Federal resources. Districts with less poverty are more likely to find information and assistance from *subject matter* and *professional associations* and *education publications*, and less likely to find state and Federal sources, relevant to their needs. Recall, however, that all districts - including high poverty districts - find 'state' and 'other' sources of assistance more helpful than Federal sources. (Charts 3.22 and 3.23)

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[8] Taken from Table 89, Public school districts and enrollment, by size and district: 1988-89 to 1994-95 for the 1994-95 school year. *Digest of Education Statistics 1996* (NCES 96-133), p. 96.

[9] Of course, districts that have other contacts with ED may be better prepared to interpret the information in the mailings.

[10] Op.Cit., *Digest of Education of Education Statistics*.

Table 3.15 SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE by Poverty

How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you (A) understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform or (B) understand the new flexibility and accountability provisions in the federal legislation?

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Low Poverty[1] n=381	Medium Poverty n=1820	High Poverty[2] n=499
(A) On Standards				
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for standards-based reform*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	17 **	24	31 **
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	21 ***	30	36 *
	Other contacts with State officials	21	26	34 **
	State developed content standards	36	35	32
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful in implementing standards-based reform*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education	4 *	6	12 **
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	8 ***	15	19
	ED on-line services	3	5	7
	1-800-USA-LEARN	2	2	5
	Other contacts with ED officials	8	9	14 *
	National model content standards	19	14	16
	Regional Education Laboratories	22	18	19
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	8	12	19 **
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful in implementing standards-based reform*	National Science Foundation-funded initiatives	18	13	19 *
	Subject matter associations	47 ***	29	30
	Other professional associations	42 ***	30	25
	Education periodicals/publications	43 ***	30	28
	Institutions of higher education	9	12	15
	Other districts	27 *	34	29
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	5	6	6
(B) On Statutory Provisions				
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for new federal provisions*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	15 **	22	34 ***
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	16 ***	27	38 ***
	Other contacts with State officials	15 ***	24	30 *
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for understanding new federal provisions*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education	4 *	7	16 ***
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	5 ***	12	17 *
	ED on-line services	1 ***	3	6
	1-800-USA-LEARN	0 ***	2	4
	Other contacts with ED officials	4	8	11
	Regional Education Laboratories	12	10	13
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	8	11	20 ***
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for understanding new federal provisions*	Other professional associations	21	20	18
	Education periodicals/publications	24	19	21
	Other districts	18 **	26	22
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	6	6	8

Poverty is based on the % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census.
Low Poverty= <5% Medium Poverty= 5%-<25% High Poverty= 25+%
[1] Tests differences between low poverty and medium poverty districts (std.errors=1%-3%)
[2] Tests differences between high poverty and medium poverty districts (std.errors=2%-3%)

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests.

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MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS

Table 3.16 shows the results of multiple regression analysis. As should be clear, the bivariate results generally hold when poverty, district size and policy context are considered simultaneously. Being in an 'early reform' state dramatically boosts the reported helpfulness to districts of *state-developed content standards*. In fact, state standards appear to be the primary source of assistance distinguishing districts in 'early reform' reform states. Having a Goals 2000 grant appears to be related to having better connections with many different sources of information, particularly Federal and 'other' sources. Higher poverty also appears to boost connectedness with state and Federal technical assistance and information providers, especially regarding Federal statutory provisions, but it is negatively associated with assistance in standards-based reform from 'other' sources. Higher levels of poverty also appear to be negatively associated with the helpfulness of *state-developed content standards*, a finding that calls for careful follow-up because it may suggest that high poverty districts consider state standards beyond their reach.

Table 3.16 SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE Full Model

How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you (A) understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform, or (B) understand the new flexibility and accountability provisions in the federal legislation?

DEPENDENT VARIABLE		Intercept[a]	Percent Poverty[1]	Districts w/Goals 2000 Subgrants[2]	Districts in Early Reform States[3]	Log of District Enrollmt[4]
(A) On Standards						
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for standards-based reform*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	23.70	0.42 ***	2.06	5.44	2.24 **
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	29.40	0.36 ***	1.50	3.56	1.99 *
	Other contacts with State officials	25.55	0.34 ***	5.21 *	4.20	4.17 ***
	State developed content standards	33.57	-0.22 *	5.18 *	14.02 ***	3.41 ***
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful in implementing standards-based reform*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education	7.17	0.27 ***	-0.26	3.82 *	2.75 ***
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	14.16	0.38 ***	3.94	3.63	3.11 ***
	ED on-line services	3.48	0.17 *	4.75 *	1.27	11.12 ***
	1-800-USA-LEARN	1.19	0.08	5.30 **	-1.40	0.30
	Other contacts with ED officials	8.20	0.17	7.37 **	3.42	2.15 *
	National model content standards	11.53	0.003	11.73 ***	-2.41	4.84 ***
	Regional Education Laboratories	16.83	0.26 *	6.41 *	-2.19	0.19
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	11.47	0.37 ***	3.50	3.22	3.43 ***
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful in implementing standards-based reform*	National Science Foundation-funded initiatives	13.06	0.14	5.58 *	1.15	4.44 ***
	Subject matter associations	28.07	-0.42 ***	10.75 ***	2.85	7.89 ***
	Other professional associations	28.21	-0.35 ***	9.37 ***	5.82	4.13 ***
	Education periodicals/publications	29.53	-0.31 ***	9.33 ***	2.44	6.38 ***
	Institutions of higher education	9.84	0.21 **	5.13 **	0.33	0.81
	Other districts	30.37	0.11	4.07	4.61	-2.98 **
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	5.60	0.06	2.54	-0.99	1.49 *
(B) On Statutory Provisions						
STATE SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for new federal provisions*	Written guidance from State Education Agency	22.94	0.63 ***	2.27	0.55	4.22 ***
	State sponsored conferences/workshops	26.49	0.77 ***	3.96	-7.83 *	5.38 ***
	Other contacts with State officials	22.97	0.47 ***	4.43	-0.65	5.19 ***
FEDERAL SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for understanding new federal provisions*	Written information from U.S. Department of Education	8.69	0.43 ***	0.26	-3.51	4.42 ***
	ED sponsored conferences/workshops	11.99	0.46 ***	1.07	-0.43	5.11 ***
	ED on-line services	13.20	0.15 *	7.31 **	3.51	0.28
	1-800-USA-LEARN	1.71	0.13 *	2.47	-1.47	0.83
	Other contacts with ED officials	6.64	0.27 ***	4.78 *	-2.27	3.37 ***
	Regional Education Laboratories	8.86	0.24 *	6.40 **	-7.21 **	1.42
	Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers	10.05	0.42 ***	7.10 **	-2.62	3.24 ***
OTHER SOURCES *% of districts reporting very helpful for understanding new federal provisions*	Other professional associations	18.73	-0.08	3.09	3.17	3.81 ***
	Education periodicals/publications	19.53	-0.06	4.56 *	-2.07	4.21 ***
	Other districts	23.26	-0.08	3.66	2.95	-1.04
	Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	5.96	0.15 *	1.65	1.42	0.95

[a]The intercept is an estimate of the outcome given mean poverty and mean size.

[1]Percent poverty= % of 5-17 year-olds living in poverty in the district according to the 1990 Census (std errors= 0.1%-0.3%).

[2]Early Reform States= KY, MD, and OR (std errors=2%-4%).

[3]District enrollment= total student enrollment as reported in the Common Core of Data, 1993-94 (std errors=0.6%-0.9%).

*** = p < .001 ** = p < .01 * = p < .05
Significance levels based on two-tail tests

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SUMMARY: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DISTRICTS

Nationally, districts reported they find state and 'other' sources of information and technical assistance most helpful in their reform efforts. They generally do not find direct help from Federal sources very helpful which is not surprising since Federal efforts are more likely to be directed to the state level. One surprising finding was the high rates of contact and the high helpfulness rating given to *education periodicals and publications*, suggesting that this avenue of communication is particularly useful for reaching school districts.

Differences emerged across districts in different policy contexts. Districts in 'early reform' states, for example, seem to be particularly closely connected to state sources of assistance, particularly *state-developed content standards*. And districts with Goals 2000 subgrants appear to have multiple helpful sources of information and assistance, suggesting that they are more "cosmopolitan" than the typical district in the United States.

District size and district poverty rates also appear to affect the provision of helpful technical assistance to districts. Larger districts appear to be particularly well connected to helpful sources of assistance while small districts appear to be isolated. Designing ways to better reach the smaller districts is a challenge for reformers. Districts with higher poverty rates appear to be well connected to state and Federal sources of assistance, but do not appear to be very closely tied to 'other' sources of help, e.g., subject matter and professional associations. In general, higher poverty districts seem to have "good" connections for information and assistance about Federal programs, but not especially strong connections for standards-based reform more generally. This weak link may limit the extent to which Federal programs can promote high standards in high poverty districts.

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B. STATE LEVEL RESULTS

This section presents results from the *Survey of State Officials*, in particular Title I Directors and Goals 2000 Coordinators. Questions were designed to address the extent to which respondents a) were well-informed about Federal reforms associated with Title I and Goals 2000, b) received useful information from various sources and c) needed more assistance.

STANDARDS-BASED REFORM

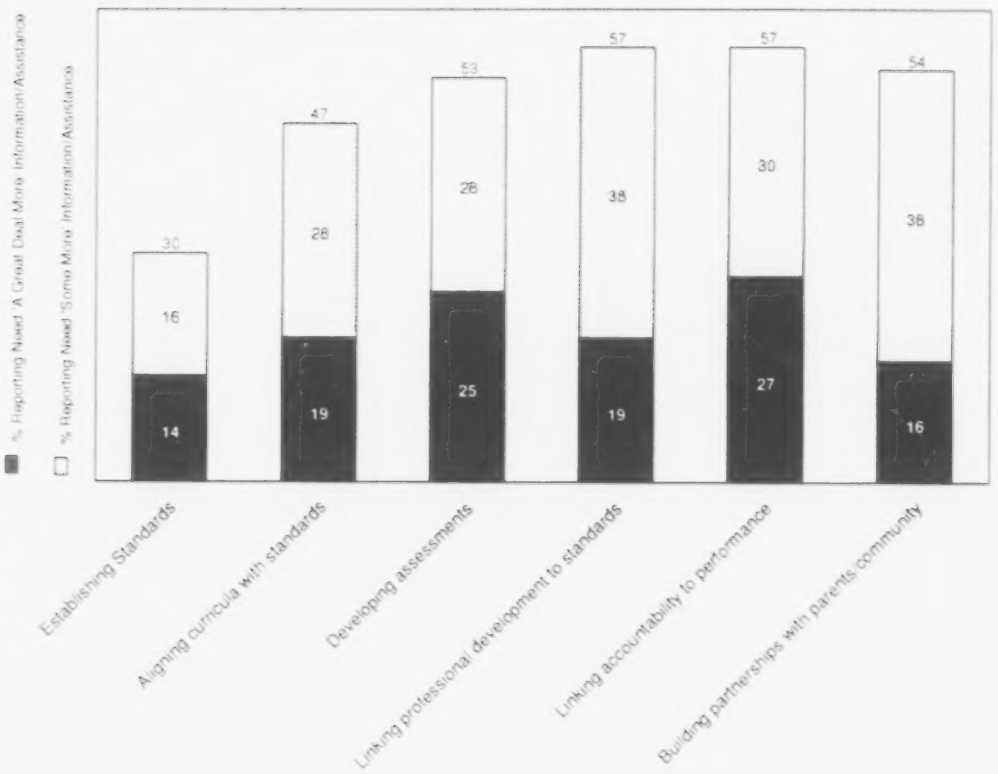
State officials generally think that ED has provided them with a *clear and consistent vision of comprehensive standards-based reform*. When asked if they agreed with this statement, 58 percent of the respondents reported 'to a great extent' and another 32 percent reported 'somewhat'. A fairly common theme, however, developed in responses to an open-ended question about concerns that officials might have. While officials concurred that the "vision" of reform presented by ED is clear and consistent, they also complained that many of the details associated with carrying out reform were missing. The most often cited gap was in the lack of Final Guidance on Standards and Assessment. Issues associated with assessment were particularly troubling for respondents and emerged in a number of places in survey responses. A number of officials, for example, expressed confusion about how to define "adequate yearly progress" meaningfully for reform in the absence of a state assessment system linked to standards.

State officials also reported needing a 'great deal' more information on specific elements of reform. The findings parallel findings at the district level with State officials most often identifying *developing assessments* (25%) and *linking accountability to student performance* (27%) as areas in which they needed 'a great deal' of information. More than half of the officials surveyed reported they needed 'some' or 'a great deal' of information and assistance in four of the six areas of standards-based reform (Chart 3.26).

Chart 3.26

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Need for More Information/Assistance State-Level Report

Q4. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas



Reports from the state level about the helpfulness of various sources of assistance in standards-based reform contrast with the earlier reports from the districts level. Whereas only seven percent of districts found *written information from ED* 'very helpful', 39 percent of state officials did. And while only 10 percent of district officials found *other contact* with ED officials 'very helpful', fully 54 percent of state officials found *oral information (phone or*

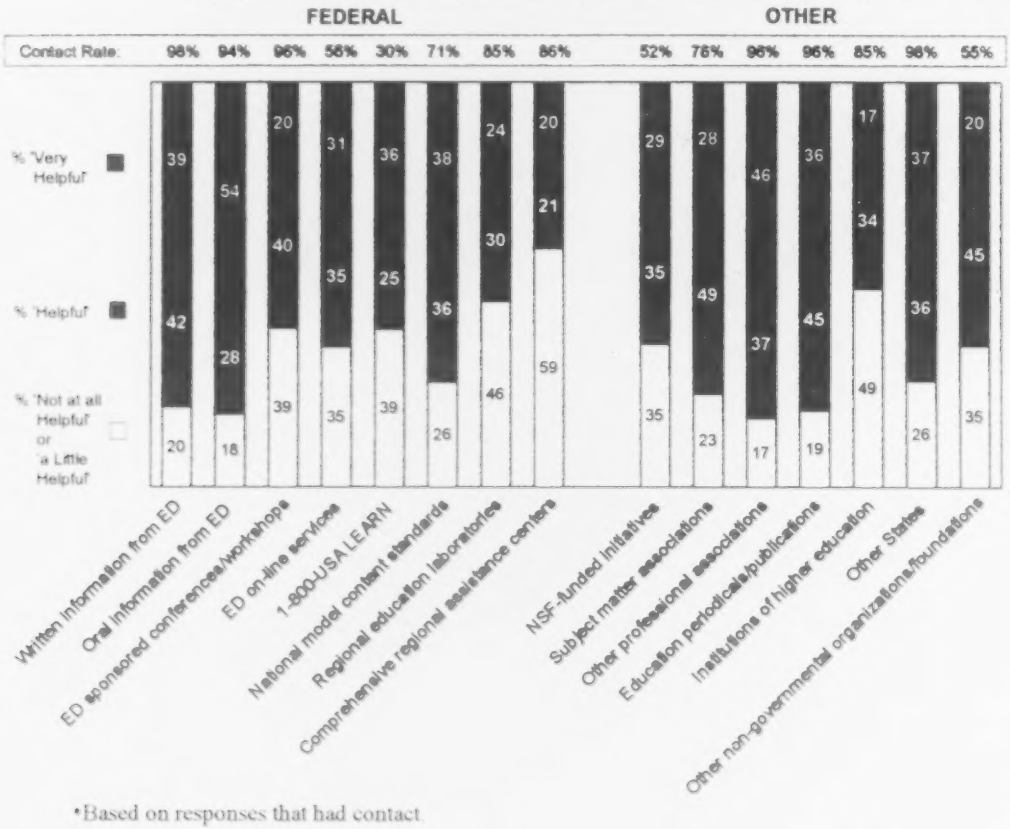
meetings with ED officials) 'very helpful.'

In general, Federal sources were clearly among the most valuable sources of information and assistance on standards-based reform for state officials. (Chart 3.27) Respondents at the state and district levels were both likely to consider *professional associations* and *education periodicals and publications* as 'very helpful' sources of information and assistance. In response to an open-ended question in which officials were asked about their "preferred" way of receiving information, the most common responses were "on-line" and "in workshops". They were very insistent and consistent, however, that they did not find large national conferences and workshops useful. They preferred smaller regional workshops where states would be able to share experiences and learn from each other.

Chart 3.27

Standards-Based Reform: Reported Helpfulness of Sources of Information/Assistance* State-Level Report

Q. How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform?


FEDERAL
OTHER
Contact Rate:
98% 94% 96% 56% 30% 71% 85% 86% 52% 78% 98% 96% 85% 98% 55%
% 'Very Helpful'
% 'Helpful'
% 'Not at all Helpful' or 'a Little Helpful'
39 54 20 31 36 38 24 20 29 28 46 36 17 37 20
42 28 40 35 25 36 30 21 35 49 37 45 34 36 45
20 18 39 35 39 26 46 59 35 23 17 19 49 26 35
Written information from ED
Oral information from ED
ED sponsored conferences/workshops
ED on-line service
1-800-USA LEARN
National model content standards
Regional education laboratories
Comprehensive regional assistance centers
NSF-funded initiatives
Subject matter associations
Other professional associations
Education periodicals/publications
Institutions of higher education
Other States
Other non-governmental organizations/foundations

*Based on responses that had contact.

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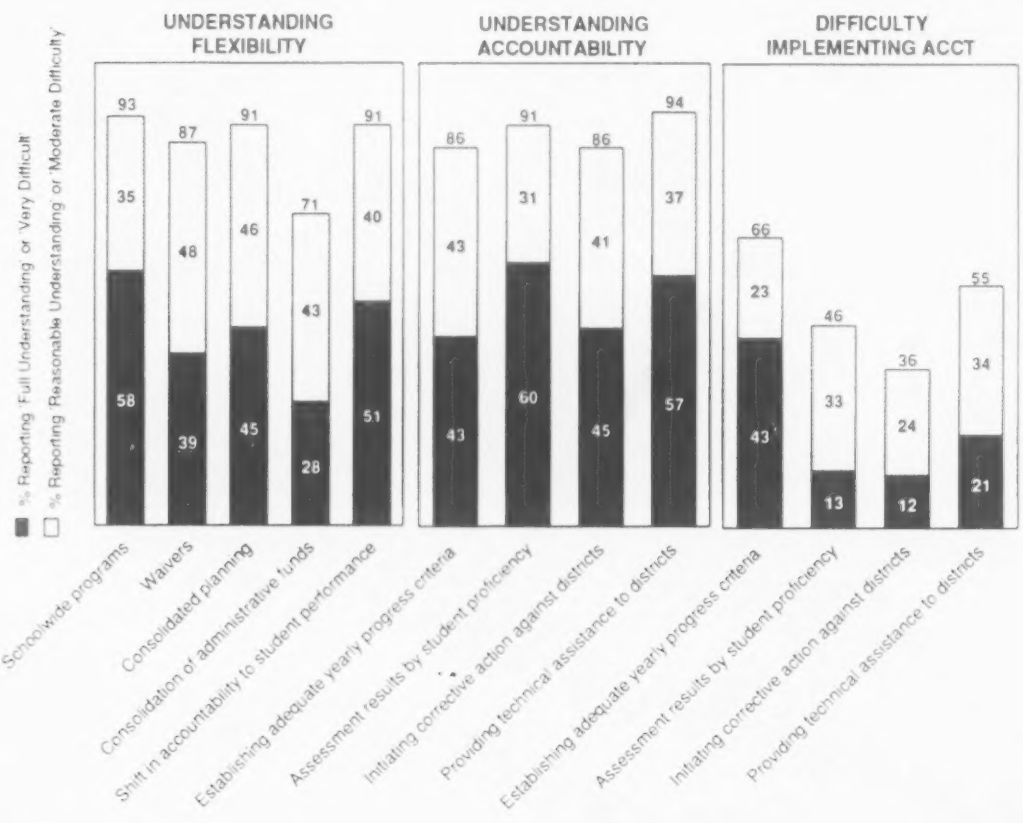
STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Reports of understanding of new Federal flexibility and accountability provisions were also high. Among the flexibility provisions, the lowest level of understanding was *consolidation of Federal administrative funds*; and, even here, over 70 percent of respondents reported they had a 'reasonable' of 'full' understanding. (Chart 3.28) Reports of understanding of the accountability provisions for Title I were similarly high, although 66 percent of state officials expected *establishing adequate yearly progress* for school and LEAs and *providing technical assistance to districts* to be either 'moderately' or 'very' difficult to implement.

Chart 3.28

Statutory Provisions: Reported Understanding and Difficulty State-Level Report

Q9&21. For each provision identified, please rate the extent to which you understand the provision and the expected difficulty of implementing it in your district

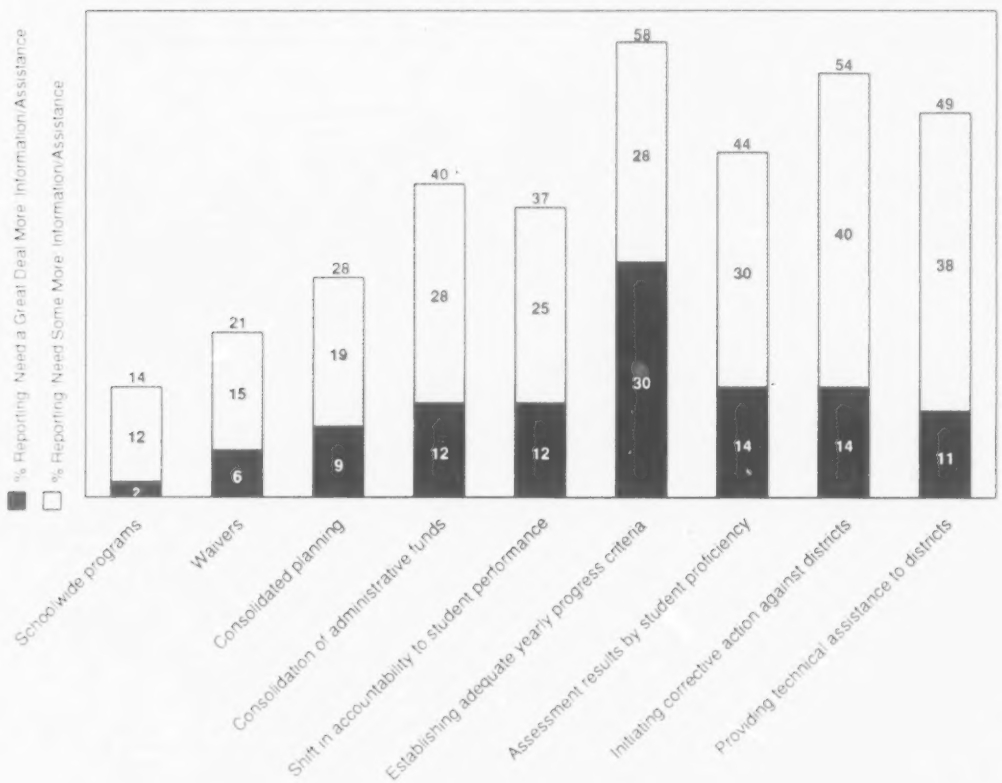


By far, officials were most likely to report needing 'a great deal' of information and assistance in *establishing adequate yearly progress criteria.* Thirty percent of respondents made this claim. When reports of needing 'some' information are added, *initiating corrective action with districts in need of improvement* emerged as a second area where states needed the most help. Other areas associated with *reporting assessment results by student proficiency level* and *providing effective technical assistance* were also rated highly as areas where assistance was needed (Chart 3.29).

Chart 3.29

Statutory Provisions: Reported Need for More Information/Assistance State-Level Report

Q12. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.

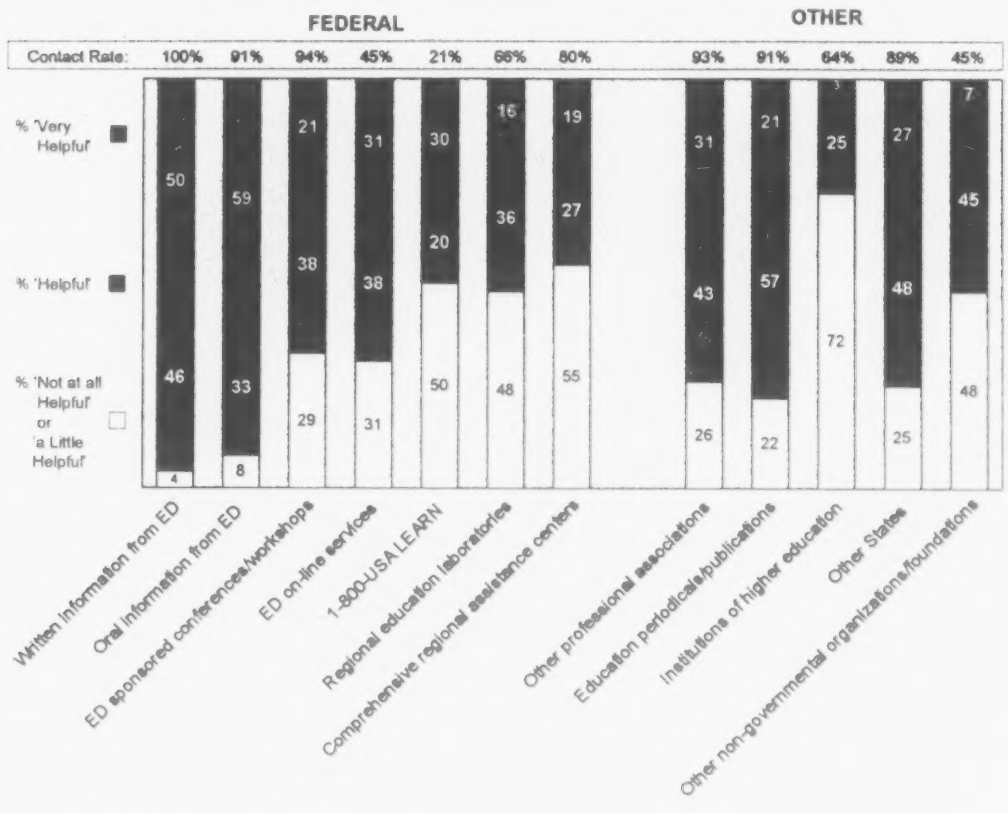


As they did with standards-based reform, state officials considered Federal sources - especially *written information from ED* and *oral information from ED* - most helpful in understanding the new flexibility and accountability provisions. (Chart 3.30) A relatively large fraction of state officials who used *ED on-line services* and *1-800-USA-LEARN* also found them 'very helpful', although the contact rate with these sources of information was low. *Professional associations*, *education publications* and *other states* were also highly rated in terms of helpfulness.

Chart 3.30

Statutory Provisions: Reported Helpfulness of Sources of Information/Assistance* State-Level Report

Q10. How helpful have each of the following sources of information been to your understanding of the new flexibility and accountability provisions in federal legislation?



*Based on responses that had contact.

State officials also gave ED high marks in other areas. For the 34 percent of officials who reported that their state had been visited by a U. S. Department of Education Regional Service Team (RST) by the time of the state survey, 47 percent reported integrated program reviews to be 'very helpful' and another 31 percent reported them to be 'helpful'. Only 18 percent of officials, whether or not their state had been visited, expected integrated program review to be 'little' or 'no' help. None of the officials who had actually been visited by an RST gave such a report.

In response to an open-ended question about integrated reviews, however, state officials expressed concerns, most often about program consolidation and individual program compliance. While ED encourages comprehensive planning and the submission of consolidated plans, states are not relieved of responsibilities described in the regulations and statutes for individual programs. This raised questions in the minds of some state officials about the extent of flexibility that actually comes with integrating programs and the bases of compliance for programs that are part of an integrated plan. Officials also raised concerns that not all the ED program staff were "on board" in terms of integrated programs; some still had parochial program orientations. They were also concerned that RST members might not represent the areas of expertise they most need.

In general, state level officials reported they have a good understanding of both standards-based reform and the new statutory provisions in ESEA. They also appear to well-connected to helpful sources of information and technical assistance. At the same time, they reported the need for greater assistance in some areas, in particular important areas associated with assessment, accountability and providing effective technical assistance.

IV. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was conducted to collect information from school district and state administrators about their views of reform, the progress they are making, areas in which they need more assistance and the sources of assistance they find most helpful. The results represent the first systematic feedback from the field on the state of reform since the passage of Goals 2000 and the reauthorization of ESEA in 1994. In this chapter, we summarize key findings and discuss their implications. In short, the results provide possibly important direction to ED in where to target its technical assistance and information efforts, what areas on which to focus, and how to effectively reach state and local administrators focused on reform.

Reform Progress

The results show the state of progress in reform. Some of the results suggest good progress and other results point to areas that need attention. In general, administrators nationally at both the district and the state level claim to have a good understanding of standards-based reform, its specific elements, and the flexibility and accountability changes in Title I that came out of the 1994 ESEA reauthorization and that are designed to support reform. This understanding is an important, and probably necessary, step in the reform process. It is far from sufficient, however. It is also somewhat unclear how much stock to put in statements of understanding since we have no objective measures of understanding. But it is, at least, probably safe to conclude that state and local administrators feel very familiar with the basic elements of reform as well as with the new statutory provisions. State-level administrators, however, stated they needed more detail on how to operationalize the vision of reform presented by ED. And there is some indication that district level administrators may be somewhat overconfident in their understanding since a sizeable minority of district respondents expect reform to require little change on their part. Certainly this is not the view of the proponents of standards-based reform.

Respondents also identified possibly weak links in the reform process. At both the district and the state level administrators identified areas associated with assessments and accountability as areas that require the greatest change on their part, in which they are making the least progress, and where they need the most help. Another area that appears to problematic at both the state and district level is providing effective technical assistance to schools and districts that are not making adequate progress. These areas are probably the most critical pieces of the reform process. While it may be too early to expect states and districts to have these pieces in place, they are areas in which technical assistance efforts should now be concentrated. If solid development in these areas does not occur, the reform process is sure to be stalled and its overall effect severely stunted. The proposal by ED to offer voluntary national tests may help at least some states and districts in this regard.

Differences Across Districts

There were marked differences across different types of districts which are both encouraging and disturbing. On the positive side, the findings clearly show that districts that are located in states **where there is an active state-led reform effort** report not only greater understanding of reform but greater progress. Reports of their understanding also have some credibility since they also report that reform requires greater change than other districts report. The relationship between districts and the state in 'early reform' states also appears to be closer and reportedly more helpful than in other states, further suggesting that something different and productive is happening in these states. These findings suggest that ED continue with its efforts to provide assistance to states through state-based organizations and associations, such as the State Education Improvement Partnership (SEIP) which is a collaborative effort of five state-based organizations (NGA, NASBE, NCSL, ECS, and CCSSO).

The findings also suggest that grants to promote reform from the Federal level to school districts -- Goals 2000 subgrants -- also influence local views of reform and assessments of the amount of change it requires, although they do not seem to be strongly related to reports of actual progress. One explanation for the lack or significant findings on progress is that it was too early to see effects. Districts had only had Goals 2000 funding for about one year at the time of data collection.

Differences in reports of district administrators from different **size** districts are somewhat disturbing. Smaller districts appear to be at a disadvantage. They report significantly lower levels of understanding of the various elements of reform as well as less progress. They also appear to be not well-connected to helpful sources of information and assistance and information. Probably because smaller districts are less likely to have specialized staff to attend to reform and Federal program issues, determining effective ways to transmit information to them is not obvious. Indeed, it is not even clear if many smaller districts have sufficient awareness of reform and its demands to avail themselves of relevant assistance when it is available.

Any solutions to the problem of the apparent isolation of small districts should probably be two-pronged including both a demand as well as a supply approach. On the demand side, there may be a need to make small districts more aware that they are, in fact, in an information disadvantaged environment. This awareness may make it more likely that districts will attend to information and assistance when it is available. On the supply side, information and assistance providers may need to develop a targeted effort to reach smaller districts. Special mailings, and 800 number dedicated to smaller districts, and small district conferences, for example, may more effectively reach smaller districts than more broadly oriented dissemination and technical assistance strategies.

Differences in responses across districts with different **poverty levels** was also troubling. Districts with the least poverty reported the greatest understanding of standards-based reform and the greatest progress. Those with the greatest poverty reported they face the most change and

are apparently having difficulty establishing standards and aligning the curricula, presumably the early steps of reform. The districts with greatest poverty claim they also need a great deal of assistance in implementing reform. Not surprisingly, higher poverty districts report they have a better understanding of Federal provisions, but they also claim they need a great deal of help in providing technical assistance to schools not making adequate progress. In other words, they apparently understand what they are supposed to do, but do not know how to do it effectively. Together these findings suggest that, unless there is some focused effort to help high poverty school districts achieve higher standards, they may lag further behind as reform takes hold in more affluent areas. The major ray of hope for higher poverty districts comes from the 'early reform' states. The findings suggest they are particularly effective with districts with higher poverty levels. Closer analysis of what these states are doing to target districts with high levels of poverty may be well worthwhile.

Sources of Helpful Technical Assistance

The findings on the helpfulness of different sources of assistance to school districts and states is instructive for ED. State officials find Federal sources especially helpful in reform. They also place a high value on the assistance provided by professional associations and education publications. School districts are different. While districts also find professional associations and educational publications helpful, they do not find Federal sources particularly helpful in their reform efforts. They do, however, find state sources helpful.

The implications of these findings for ED technical assistance efforts are transparent. ED should continue its efforts to work through the states. States provide important leverage for Federal efforts at the district level, and districts clearly value state help. Working through the states is no doubt also a more efficient route for ED to reach districts than to try to reach the nearly 15,000 school districts in the country on a case-by-case basis. Any Federal efforts to assist school districts directly should be targeted to those districts discussed above that appear to be only weakly connected to helpful sources of assistance, but even here it may make better sense to work through the states or professional associations with targeted strategies. The findings also suggest that taking advantage of non-federal education publications may be an effective way for ED to reach districts.

APPENDIX A: *District Survey* Instrument

U.S. Department of Education School District Survey	**OMB No.: 18750118** **Expiration Date: 8/31/96**

This survey is being administered by the Urban Institute under contract for the U.S. Department of Education. The survey is designed to collect your views about the value, adequacy and timeliness of federal assistance in your reform efforts. The questions also ask about your experience with various aspects of comprehensive standards-based education reform and the extent to which you find different sources of information/ technical assistance useful.

DEFINITION FOR THIS SURVEY: **Comprehensive standards-based reform** is defined as efforts to improve education for all students by establishing high content and performance standards and redesigning the various components of the education system - curriculum, instruction, professional development and assessment - in a coordinated and coherent fashion to support students' learning to the standards. Currently, there is discussion of the need to establish new high standards for student achievement both in the content that students are expected to learn (content standards) and in the level of performance that students are expected to achieve (performance standards, e.g., proficient, advanced, novice). Standards go beyond general expectations for student learning in that they are written, may be externally developed and are to be applied uniformly by all teachers.

DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS (for school year 1995-96)
Before beginning, please describe your district in terms of the following characteristics.

District enrollment _____ (Number of students)

Revenue sources: federal _____%

state _____%

local _____%

Total *100%*

Percentage of students in the district eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program _____%

Number of elementary schools_____; Number of middle/ junior high schools ____; Number of high schools _____

Respondent Information: (person completing this form)	**Please make corrections directly on label:**
Name: _____ Last Name First Name Middle Initial Title _____ Phone Number: (____) _____ - _____ Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview by telephone? _____Yes _____No	

Please return completed survey by June 7, 1996 to:	If you have any questions, please contact:
The Urban Institute **2100 M Street, NW** **Washington, DC 20037** Attention: **Julie O'Brian**	Julie O'Brian Phone: (202) 857-8739 Fax: (202) 466-3982 E-mail: jobrian@ui.urban.org

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 18750118. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) of suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Planning and Evaluation Service, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202.

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I. IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORM

1. **The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (Goals 2000) and the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) support comprehensive standards-based education reform (defined on previous page). Report (a) the extent to which you UNDERSTAND what it means to implement each of the following components of reform in your district; (b) how much CHANGE will be required in your district to implement each component; and © your district's actual progress in IMPLEMENTING each component.** (Circle your responses.)

	a. Understanding				*b. Change Required*				*c. Progress Implementing*			
	No Understanding	Limited Understanding	Reasonable Understanding	Full Understanding	No Change	A Little Change	Some Change	A Great Deal of Change	Have not Begun	Little Progress	Some Progress	A Great Deal of Progress
Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Linking professional development to standards	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Linking school/district accountability to student performance	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Building partnerships with parents/community	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

2. ***Goals 2000* and the reauthorization of *ESEA* provide for greater flexibility in implementing federal programs. For each flexibility provision identified, please rate the extent to which you UNDERSTAND the provision.** (Circle your responses.)

	Understanding			
	No Understanding	Limited Understanding	Reasonable Understanding	Full Understanding
Schoolwide programs through Title I	1	2	3	4
Waivers of federal education provisions	1	2	3	4
Consolidated planning for federal programs	1	2	3	4
Consolidation of federal administrative funds	1	2	3	4
Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	1	2	3	4

3. **The reauthorization of the *ESEA* included changes in accountability mechanisms for Title I. For each provision identified, please rate (a) the extent to which you UNDERSTAND the accountability provision; and (b) the expected difficulty of IMPLEMENTING it in your district.** (Circle your responses.)

	a. Understanding				*b. Difficulty in Implementing*			
	No Understanding	Limited Understanding	Reasonable Understanding	Full Understanding	Not at all Difficult	Minor Difficulties	Moderate Difficulties	Very Difficult
Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Developing school performance profiles	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate progress	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

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4. **Using the scale from 1 to 6 where 1 is "none" and 6 is "a great deal", indicate how much actual influence you think each person or organization has in: a) curriculum used in classrooms; b) standards of student performance; and c) assessment of student performance.**

	a. Curriculum						*b. Performance Standards*						*c. Assessment*					
	none					a great deal	none					a great deal	none					a great deal
State department of education	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local school board	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
District level administrators	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Principals and teachers at the school	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. **How many schools in your district were identified for school improvement according to Chapter 1/Title I criteria:**

a. **In the 1995-96 school year?** _____ Number of schools _____ Don't Know

b. **For the last two or more consecutive years?** _____ Number of schools _____ Don't Know

6. **Please indicate the number of schools in your district that are <u>eligible</u> and <u>currently have</u> or are <u>developing a plan to have</u> a schoolwide Title I program.**

a. **In the 1995-96 school year:** _____# of schools eligible

_____# of schools that have or are developing programs ____Don't Know

b. **In the 1996-97 school year:** _____# of schools eligible

_____# of schools that have or are developing programs ____Don't Know

7. **Have you requested any waivers of federal education regulations?**

____ Yes. (Explain purpose) _____

____ No, but planning to request. (Explain purpose) _____

____ No, and no plans.

____ Never heard of federal waiver option.

8. **Is your state an ED Flex state under *Goals 2000*?** _____ Yes _____No _____Don't Know

9. **Has your district received a subgrant under *Goals 2000* for the development or implementation of a local improvement plan?**

____ Yes _____No _____Don't Know _____Unaware of provision

10. **Have you submitted, or are you planning to submit, a consolidated local plan/application for ESEA programs?**

_____Yes _____No _____Don't Know _____ Unaware of option

11. **Will your district have the capacity in the 1996-97 school year to:**

a. **Download information from the Internet?** _____ Yes _____ No _____ Don't Know

b. **Transmit information electronically to district schools?**

_____ All schools _____ Most schools _____ Some schools _____None

II. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

12. **How helpful have each of the following sources of information or assistance been in helping you understand or implement comprehensive standards-based reform?** (Circle your responses.)

	Not at all Helpful	A Little Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	No Contact
Written guidance from State Education Agency	1	2	3	4	0
State sponsored conferences/workshops	1	2	3	4	0
Other contacts with state officials	1	2	3	4	0
Written information from U.S. Dept of Ed. (ED) (e.g., guidance, other mailings)	1	2	3	4	0
ED sponsored conferences/workshops	1	2	3	4	0
ED on-line services	1	2	3	4	0
1-800-USA-LEARN	1	2	3	4	0
Other contacts with ED officials	1	2	3	4	0
National model content standards	1	2	3	4	0
State developed content standards	1	2	3	4	0
Regional Education Labs	1	2	3	4	0
Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers (e.g., Chapter 1 TAC)	1	2	3	4	0
National Science Foundation-funded initiative (e.g., SSI, USI, RSI)	1	2	3	4	0
Subject matter associations (e.g., NCTM, NSTA)	1	2	3	4	0
Other professional associations (e.g., AASA)	1	2	3	4	0
Education periodicals/ publications	1	2	3	4	0
Institutions of higher education	1	2	3	4	0
Other districts	1	2	3	4	0
Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	1	2	3	4	0
Other (specify)_____	1	2	3	4	0

13. **How helpful have each of the following sources of information been to your understanding of the new flexibility and accountability provisions in federal legislation (e.g., waivers, schoolwide programs)?** (Circle your responses.)

	Not at all Helpful	A Little Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	No Contact
Written guidance from State Education Agency	1	2	3	4	0
State sponsored conferences/workshops	1	2	3	4	0
Other contacts with state officials	1	2	3	4	0
Written information from U.S. Dept of Ed. (ED) (e.g., guidance, other mailings)	1	2	3	4	0
ED sponsored conferences/workshops	1	2	3	4	0
ED on-line services	1	2	3	4	0
1-800-USA-LEARN	1	2	3	4	0
Other contacts with ED officials	1	2	3	4	0
Regional Education Labs	1	2	3	4	0
Federally-supported Technical Assistance Centers (e.g., Chapter 1 TAC)	1	2	3	4	0
Professional associations (e.g., AASA)	1	2	3	4	0
Education periodicals/ publications	1	2	3	4	0
Other districts	1	2	3	4	0
Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	1	2	3	4	0
Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	0

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14. **How frequently has your district received or requested assistance from a federally-supported technical assistance center in the past 12 months?**

_____ Multiple Times _____Once _____Never _____Don't Know

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
If yes, how would you rate that assistance? (Circle ONLY one.)	1	2	3	4

15. **Is the recent change from categorical centers to comprehensive regionally-based technical assistance centers affecting the assistance you receive from these centers?**

_____ Yes _____No _____Don't Know

If yes, how? _____

_____

16. **Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you NEED ADDITIONAL information or assistance in each of the following areas.** (Circle your responses.)

	Have Adequate Info.	Need a Little More Info/Asst	Need Some More Info/Asst.	Need a Great Deal More Info/Asst.
Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	1	2	3	4
Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	1	2	3	4
Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	1	2	3	4
Linking professional development to standards	1	2	3	4
Linking school/district accountability to student performance	1	2	3	4
Building partnerships with parents and community	1	2	3	4
Schoolwide programs through Title I	1	2	3	4
Waivers of federal education provisions	1	2	3	4
Consolidated planning for federal programs	1	2	3	4
Consolidation of federal administrative funds	1	2	3	4
Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	1	2	3	4
Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for schools	1	2	3	4
Reporting assessment results by student proficiency levels	1	2	3	4
Developing school performance profiles	1	2	3	4
Providing effective technical assistance for schools not making adequate progress	1	2	3	4
Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4

17. **In what format do you prefer to receive information? Please rank the following in order of your preference from 1 to 4, with 1 = 1st choice; 2 = 2nd choice; 3 = 3rd choice; and 4 = 4th choice. If you do not have access to format 'c' (electronic), circle "No Access."**

		Rank	
a.	Hard copy (e.g., written guidance, journal articles)	____	
b.	Workshops or conferences	____	
c.	Electronic (e.g., e-mail, Internet, electronic bulletin boards)	____	No Access
d.	Other (specify)_____	____	

18. **Overall, rate the timeliness with which you have received the following types of information from the U.S. Department of Education.** (Circle your responses.)

	Very Slow	Somewhat Slow	Somewhat Timely	Very Timely	Don't Know / Not Applicable
Official regulations and guidance on federal programs	1	2	3	4	0
Responses to waiver requests	1	2	3	4	0
Responses to requests for information	1	2	3	4	0

Thank You

APPENDIX B: *State Survey* Instrument

SELF-CONTAINED SURVEY FOR GOALS 2000 COORDINATOR

STATE: _____

Program: _____

Respondent's Position/Title: _____

Survey Completion Date: _____

Federal Assistance With Comprehensive Standards-Based Reform

1. To what extent do you feel that the written and oral communications of the U.S. Department of Education have provided a clear and consistent vision of comprehensive standards-based reform? ***NOTE:*** *Comprehensive standards-based reform is defined as: Efforts to improve education for all students by establishing high content and performance standards and redesigning the various components of the education system - including curriculum, instruction, professional development and assessment - in a coordinated and coherent fashion to support students' learning to the standards.* (CIRCLE ONE.)

a.	Not at all	1	
b.	To a small extent	2	
c.	Somewhat	3	
d.	To a great extent	4	
e.	Don't know	0	____

2. Are there particular areas of confusion? Please describe.

3. How helpful have each of the following sources of information been to your progress in comprehensive standards-based reform (that is, to your progress in establishing standards, assessments, curriculum, professional development, etc.) (CIRCLE RESPONSES.)

Source of Information	Not at all Helpful	A Little Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	No Contact
Written information from U.S. Dept of Ed. (ED) (e.g., guidance, other mailings)	1	2	3	4	0
Oral information from ED (phone or meetings with officials)	1	2	3	4	0
ED sponsored conferences/workshops	1	2	3	4	0
ED on-line services	1	2	3	4	0
1-800-USA-LEARN (ED's toll-free number)	1	2	3	4	0
National model content standards	1	2	3	4	0
Regional Education Labs	1	2	3	4	0
New Federally-supported Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers	1	2	3	4	0
National Science Foundation-funded initiative (e.g., SSI, USI, RSI)	1	2	3	4	0
Subject matter associations (e.g., NCTM, NSTA)	1	2	3	4	0
Other professional associations (e.g., CCSSO)	1	2	3	4	0
Education periodicals/ publications	1	2	3	4	0
Institutions of higher education	1	2	3	4	0
Other States	1	2	3	4	0
Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	1	2	3	4	0
Other (SPECIFY)_____					

4. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources on comprehensive standards-based reform, please indicate the extent to which you need additional information or assistance in each of the following areas. (CIRCLE RESPONSES.)

Area	Have Adequate Info or Asst.	Need a Little More Info or Asst.	Need Some More Info or Asst.	Need a Great Deal More Info or Asst.
Establishing high content and performance standards for all students	1	2	3	4
Aligning curricula and instructional materials with standards	1	2	3	4
Developing or adopting assessments linked to standards	1	2	3	4
Linking professional development to standards	1	2	3	4
Linking school/district accountability to student performance	1	2	3	4
Building partnerships with parents and community	1	2	3	4

For ratings '3' and '4' please provide suggestions on how the US Department of Education might help (e.g., do you have preferred ways of receiving information? On-line? Workshops? Printed materials?)

5. The U.S. Department of Education has recently changed its approach to program monitoring. Are you aware of the establishment of Regional Service Teams within the Federal Department of Education to conduct integrated reviews across Federal elementary and secondary education programs?

_____ Yes _____ No

6. Have you been contacted by a member of a Regional Service Team regarding an integrated review of Federal elementary and secondary education programs?

_____ Yes, our state has been visited by a Regional Service Team

_____ Yes, our state has been contacted by a Regional Service Team member

_____ No, our state has had no contact with a Regional Service Team

7. How helpful do you think the Department's strategy for conducting integrated program reviews will be to your state in implementing comprehensive standards-based reform? (CIRCLE ONE)

Not at all Helpful	A Little Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	0

8. Do you have comments or concerns regarding integrated program reviews? Please describe.

Flexibility Provisions

9. The reauthorization of *ESEA* and *Goals 2000* provide for greater flexibility in implementing federal programs. For each of the following flexibility provisions, please rate the extent to which you understand the provision. (CIRCLE RESPONSES.)

Flexibility Provision	No Understanding	Limited Understanding	Reasonable Understanding	Full Understanding
Schoolwide programs through Title I	1	2	3	4
Waivers of federal education provisions	1	2	3	4
Consolidated planning for federal programs	1	2	3	4
Consolidation of federal administrative funds	1	2	3	4
Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	1	2	3	4

10. How helpful have each of the following sources of information been to your understanding of the new flexibility and accountability provisions in federal legislation (e.g., waivers, schoolwide programs)? (CIRCLE RESPONSES.)

Source of Information	Not at all Helpful	A Little Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	No Contact
Written information from U.S. Dept of Ed. (ED) (e.g., guidance, other mailings)	1	2	3	4	0
Oral information from ED (phone or meetings with officials)	1	2	3	4	0
ED sponsored conferences/workshops	1	2	3	4	0
ED on-line services	1	2	3	4	0
1-800-USA-LEARN	1	2	3	4	0
Regional Education Labs	1	2	3	4	0
New Federally-supported Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers	1	2	3	4	0
Other professional associations (e.g., CCSSO)	1	2	3	4	0
Education periodicals/ publications	1	2	3	4	0
Institutions of higher education	1	2	3	4	0
Other States	1	2	3	4	0
Other private non-governmental organizations or foundations	1	2	3	4	0
Other (SPECIFY)_____					

11. How would you rate the assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Education with regard to waiver requests? (CIRCLE ONE.)

a. Not helpful 1
b. A little helpful 2
c. Helpful 3
d. Very helpful 4
e. Not applicable. Haven't requested a waiver 0

For ratings '1' and '2' please provide suggestions on how the U.S. Department of Education efforts might be improved.

12. Considering all the information and assistance you have received from various sources, please indicate the extent to which you need additional information or assistance in each of the following areas. (CIRCLE RESPONSES.)

	Have Adequate Info.	Need a Little More Info/Asst	Need Some More Info/Asst.	Need a Great Deal More Info/Asst.
Schoolwide programs through Title I	1	2	3	4
Waivers of federal education provisions	1	2	3	4
Consolidated planning for federal programs	1	2	3	4
Consolidation of federal administrative funds	1	2	3	4
Shift in accountability emphasis from procedural compliance to student performance	1	2	3	4
Establishing adequate yearly progress criteria for districts and schools	1	2	3	4
Reporting assessment results by student performance levels (advanced, proficient, and partially proficient)	1	2	3	4
Providing effective technical assistance for districts identified as in need of improvement	1	2	3	4
Initiating corrective action against districts identified as in need of improvement	1	2	3	4

For ratings '3' and '4' please provide suggestions on how the US Department of Education might help (e.g., do you have preferred ways of receiving information? On-line? Workshops? Printed materials?)

13. Overall, rate the timeliness with which you have received the following types of information from the U.S. Department of Education. (CIRCLE RESPONSES.)

	Very Slow	Somewhat Slow	Somewhat Timely	Very Timely	Don't Know / Not Applicable
Goals 2000 Guidance	1	2	3	4	0
ESEA, Title I, Part A Regulations	1	2	3	4	0
ESEA, Title I, Part A Guidance	1	2	3	4	0
Responses to waiver requests	1	2	3	4	0
Responses to requests for information	1	2	3	4	0